



**St. Cuthbert's**  
Roman Catholic High School

# **WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**



### **Mission Statement**

*'The Lord God requires of us that we should help others whenever we can, always make the right choices and be the best that we can be in everything that we do'.*



**St. Cuthbert's**  
Roman Catholic High School

Policy: Attendance Policy		
Type: School Policy	Website: Yes	Author: CM Hunt
Approved: 19 September 2018		Next Review: September 2019
Frequency: Annual		Delegated: Committee
Notes: This replaces the current attendance policy. Amendments include attendance banding reports and use of attendance data.		

## **1. Aims and Purpose**

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

St Cuthbert's RC High School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. St Cuthbert's RC High School values all students and we will work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour for learning and SEN(D). This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1996, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

## **2. Legal Framework**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the student was:

- present
- absent
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## **3. Categorising absence**

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the Head teacher and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Parents must advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness - Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Head teacher to authorise absence where appropriate (<95%). This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription or medication boxes. Medical evidence must contain the student's full name.

Medical evidence will also be requested if an absence exceeds three days.

For prolonged absences exceeding five days, St Cuthbert's RC High School may request additional medical evidence in the form of a doctor's note explaining the exact reason for absence and

recommended period of absence from school. In some cases, the school may refer to the School Health Service for additional advice and support.

Medical/Dental Appointments- Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students must attend school for part of the day. Parents must show the appointment card to school. If a student is absent for a full day to attend a medical appointment the student will incur half a day unauthorised absence unless medical evidence is provided.

Other Authorised Circumstances - This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement.

Excluded (No alternative provision made) - Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Leave of Absence during Term Time - **Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Head teacher.** Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. This means that the child will lose their school place. If the permission to take leave is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal sanctions including prosecution in the magistrate's court.

Religious Observance - St Cuthbert's RC High School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration, by written request by the parent, of authorised absence. Such absence will be authorised up to a maximum of two days annually.

Study Leave - Study leave may be granted for Year 11 students approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

Traveller Absence - It is expected that Traveller children, in common with all other children, are to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. When in or around Rochdale, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. St Cuthbert's RC High School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the student's school place will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

St Cuthbert's RC High School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in ongoing dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

St Cuthbert's RC High School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
  - Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
  - The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced
- Where Traveller children are registered students at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any student and appropriate statutory action may be undertaken.

**Late Arrival - Registration begins at 8.25am; students are expected to be on site from 8.20am. Students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 8.45am and students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late.** This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session and statutory action may be taken where appropriate.

On arrival after the close of register, students must immediately report to the Pastoral Office to ensure that we can be responsible for them whilst they are in school. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided; for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause. Behavioural sanctions will be implemented if a student fails to follow the signing in procedures.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the student has arrived late without justifiable cause. Persistent lateness to school will result in appropriate school sanctions such as punctuality report and punctuality panels in conjunction with the Local Authority.

**Unauthorised absence** - Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the Head teacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniform
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays
- Student refusal to attend school

The Head teacher may unauthorise a student's absence if:

- a parent/carer has not provided any or enough information
- The reason(s) that are given do not fall within those categories defined by the Education Act 1996 as legally permissible
- The reason(s) given would not normally involve an absence of that length.
- There is doubt that the information has come from a parent/carer or from someone unauthorised to act on their behalf.
- Your child's attendance is below 95%

Members of staff from St Cuthbert's RC High School may visit your home if your child is absent regardless of whether a reason for absence has been received.

#### **4. Deletions from the Register**

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, students can be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after the school has tried to locate the student.
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with the Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the student.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the student.

St Cuthbert's RC High School will follow Rochdale Borough Council's Children Missing Education protocol when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

St Cuthbert's RC High School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and, where appropriate, link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site

- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents
- Form positive relationships with students and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance. For example, good teaching and learning experiences that encourage students to attend and achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are able to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Department for Education as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Ensure that all the above priorities are shared with and reinforced by all relevant school staff
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions use the standard required should legal proceedings be instigated

The Attendance Officer will:

- Release the 'Banding Report' on a weekly basis.
- Contact the parents/carers of students who are absent. This will include both telephone calls and home visits.
- Request to see your child if a home visit is carried out. If the child is not seen at the property this information may be passed to the Safeguarding Officer
- Hold Attendance and Punctuality Panels for Students who are causing concern (with the Educational Welfare Officer)
- Send letters each half term to those parents/carers whose child's attendance has fallen below 95%
- Keep accurate records of contact and interventions used.

- Fortnightly meetings with the Senior Leadership Team whereby data, students with an attendance concern and vulnerable students will be discussed.
  - Half termly meetings whereby every student's attendance and punctuality will be assessed.
  - Transition work including contact with feeder schools and the collection of the new intake year 7 attendance certificates for early identification of students with poor attendance records or who are vulnerable. A full analysis of the school's attendance will also take place whereby vulnerable groups will be analysed and action plans will be put together to identify ways to improve attendance. Transition visits will also be carried out in some cases.
- The Attendance and Pastoral Team have strategies in place for recording, monitoring and responding to students with attendance concerns.

Request that parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send a written leave request to the Head teacher in goodtime.

## 6. Using Attendance Data

Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

The Attendance Officer will provide relevant colleagues with regular attendance data for each student within their form group/year group. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attenders at the top; every student will be colour coded as indicated below:

<p><u><i>GREEN students with attendance between 100% and</i></u></p> <p><u><i>97% AMBER students with attendance between 96%</i></u></p> <p><u><i>and 93%</i></u></p> <p><u><i>RED students with attendance 93% - 91% (*at risk of becoming</i></u></p>
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An arrow next to the student's name will indicate if their attendance has improved, stayed the same or deteriorated.

The Senior Leadership Team will receive a complete set of data.

Heads of Year will receive a complete set of data for their year groups and form groups

Form tutors will receive data on their form.

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

St Cuthbert's RC High School will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

## 7. Support Systems

School recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and / or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

St Cuthbert's RC High School also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.

Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and students
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts

- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Student Voice activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and students.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, St Cuthbert's RC High School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

## 8. Legal Sanctions

### **Prosecution**

**Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.**

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target.

The contract will be reviewed regularly. The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A student has accrued unauthorised absence following written warning to improve.

A Penalty Notice gives each parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Rochdale Borough Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

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A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months. Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This will be carried out by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and appropriate members of the Leadership Team. Changes will be recommended to the Governors' Personnel Committee and ratified by the Full Governing Body.

## REFERENCES

### **Rochdale Borough Council's Children Missing Education Protocol**

<http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/pdf/children%20missing%20education%20protocol%20-%2008%202014.pdf>

### **The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006**

Legislation.Gov.Uk

### **Rochdale Borough Council's Penalty Notice Protocol**

<https://www.clrchs.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Attendance-Penalty-Notice-Protocol1.pdf>

## **Appendix 1: Whole School Responsibility for Attendance**

Attendance is the responsibility of all in our school. Students are expected to know their weekly attendance and describe which colour of band they are currently in. This dialogue will take place on a weekly basis with the for form tutor who provides the weekly attendance updates during form time (on a designated day).

The attendance bands are as follows:

<p><b><u>GREEN students with attendance between 100% and 97%</u></b></p> <p><b><u>AMBER students with attendance between 96% and 93%</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RED students with attendance 93% - 91% (*at risk of becoming</u></b></p>
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The responsibility of students and staff is outlined below so that students are being monitored, supported, sanctioned or rewarding depending on their attendance.

Form tutor to monitor and praise  
Rewards in assemblies  
Letter of thanks to parents for 100% attendance

Form Tutor Intervention. Speak to student and discuss reasons for absence.  
Head of Year to work with attendance officer and contact parents.  
Students will be discussed with SLT at fortnightly attendance

Attendance Officer Tracking and Interventions (HoY Support)  
Parental Meetings

Attendance Officer Tracking and Interventions (HoY Support)  
EWO, Rochdale LA, External Agencies

## **Appendix 2: Registers**

All staff are responsible and have a legal obligation to register students AM (Period 1) and PM (Period 4). If registers are not taken, staff will be required to complete missing registers in retrospect and be responsible for the accuracy of the data.

**Form tutors must take an electronic register on SIMS by 8.35am. Class teachers must take a register in each lesson they teach. These should be completed within the first 10 minutes of the lesson.** If for any reason the computer system is not working, it is the responsibility of that teacher to either:

- Send for a paper copy of the register from the Attendance Officer and to complete it and return it immediately or
- To complete their own paper register, clearly marked with the date, period and group name and send it to the Attendance Officer
- Safeguarding is non-negotiable in school. Not taking a register is a breach of Safeguarding procedures.
- Staff who regularly fail to take a register or who incorrectly record attendance will be requested to attend a meeting with the Pastoral Deputy Head teacher to discuss the importance of this legal document.

<b>Mark</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Additional details</b>
/	Present	To be marked present if in attendance during the time an am or pm register is open or if a student is on an approved school visit during the times when they would normally be registered
A	Exam	Present
B	Educated Off Site	Approved education activity
C	Authorised absence	Any absence authorised by the school for exceptional circumstance e.g. a funeral
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other educational establishment)	Approved education activity
E	Excluded	Any student (up to 5 days) who is excluded with no alternative provision put in place
F	Family holiday	Granted by the Head teacher in exceptional circumstances up to a maximum of 10 days per year.
G	Unauthorised family holiday	When a student is on holiday without permission or stays longer than was agreed.  Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence

I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments )	Absence for illness other than a medical appointment
J	Interview	Approved education activity
K	DEN	Present
L	Late (before register closed)	Present
M	Medical appointment	Authorised absence
N	No reason for absence yet provided	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent without authorisation	Unauthorised absence
P	Sporting activity	Approved education activity
Q	BSU	Present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	If a traveller family have informed school that for business purposes they are travelling and the student is with them  Authorised absence
U	Late (after register closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational trip	A trip off site including residential trips  Approved education activity
W	Work experience	For any work related and authorised activity  Approved education activity
X	Not required in school	Non-compulsory attendance e.g. Year 11 after the last Friday in June
Y	Enforced closure	e.g. Closure of site (or part of it), school transport is not available, local or national emergency
Z	Not on register	The student is on a register but their start date is later
#	Planned school closure	Training days and other planned events not involving students