BLESSED HUGH FARINGDON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

All that happens in Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School occurs within the context of the school's Mission Statement (in accordance with the Trust Deed for the maintenance and advancement of the Catholic religion).

Written:	**June 2023**
Updated:	**June 2023**
Adopted:	**June 2023**
Persons Responsible:	**SLT and Headteacher**
Committee:	**Curriculum and Personnel**
Review Due:	**June 2024** **Annually**

As a Catholic school, founded on, and committed to upholding the teaching of the Church, we believe that Jesus is present in the day to day life of our community and that each member of our community has a divine origin and an eternal destiny. In discharging our responsibilities, we are guided by the principles of Catholic social teaching [CST], in which the following core values are constituted: dignity, solidarity, the common good, the option for the poor, the promotion of peace, care for creation, the dignity of work and the value of participation in society. These principles are demonstrated in our core, and wider, curriculum, in our care of students, in our work with the disadvantaged and in the outward-facing approach to our local community, our nation and to the world. As our moral compass, CST guides us in all our school activities, including the formulation, upholding and reviewing of school policies.

As a Catholic school, we regard the following characteristics as central to the human flourishing of everyone – students, staff and Governors – in our community. Our aspirations for our students are that their experience of teaching develops in them a lived belief, an authentic sense of true happiness, a lived sense of family, an experience of care and a vocation for service.

To achieve these aspirations, teaching and learning will privilege the following core virtues for every member of our community.

Grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and generous with their gifts, becoming men and women for others.

Attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and discerning about the choices they make and the effects of those choices.

Compassionate towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and loving by their just actions and forgiving words.

Faith-filled in their beliefs and hopeful for the future.

Eloquent and truthful in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.

Learned, finding God in all things; and wise in the ways they use their learning for the common good.

Curious about everything; and active in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.

Intentional in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and prophetic in the example they set to others.

Principles

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school virtues, culture and ethos that values excellent attendance, including:
- Promoting excellent attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold
- The policy reflects the current Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Guidance.

Expectations

- We expect all of our students to attend school regularly and on time. We set all students a minimum attendance target of 96%.

Timings of the school day (timings of any extraordinary days are published to parents and carers in advance)

- Morning session begins at 8:35am
- Registers close at 8:55am
- Afternoon session begins at 2:05pm
- Registers close at 2:25pm
- End of the school day ends at 3:05pm

Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader for Behaviour & Attitudes

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Supporting Heads of Year and Pastoral staff in arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

3.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy meets the requirements of the current KCSIE guidance and other related documentation. The distinction between Children Absent from Education and Children Missing Education is outlined in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy updated and ratified in July 2023 ready for September 2023

3.5 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.

3.6 Attendance Support Worker – Brighter Futures for Children

The appointed Attendance Support Worker (ASW) will:

- Work closely with schools to address school attendance issues. They will support children and young people and their families to maintain and improve attendance in school and work with other colleagues to address any issues impacting on education, signposting to other relevant support.
- Provide Direct support to improve school attendance.
- arrange regular agreed school visits/contact to review attendance, implement good practice and plan interventions – working with Year Leaders
- provide annual and termly summary of attendance data including breakdown of specific activities to support same
- Signposting and liaison with other colleagues/partners to support children/family, including Team Around the Child, consultation, child protection and core group meetings.
- Offer of support with initiatives to encourage and promote good attendance – e.g. attendance challenges, assemblies
- Offer of support for Ofsted inspections re attendance data/issues
- Offer of training for identified staff and governors regarding attendance.
- support attendance issues through home/school liaison for identified pupils and their families – e.g. home visits, telephone calls, support with appropriate referrals.
- provide preparation and administration of all legal work including producing written statements for court for unauthorised absence, the issue of fixed penalty notices for unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time and prosecution of parents/carers through the courts.

3.7 Heads of Year

The Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across their year groups
- Ensuring that the late protocol is followed by all tutors in their year group.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement within their year group
- Having an oversight of data analysis or their year group
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data within their year group.
- Supporting their tutor team in discussing attendance issues within their respective tutor groups
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Support same-day and weekly sanctions for students who are late to school or to three or more lessons in a week.
- Promote, celebrate and reward excellent and/or significantly improved attendance and punctuality in assemblies and tutor groups.
- Meeting regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to support families in need of intervention to improve attendance.

3.8 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Head of Year or Key Stage Pastoral and Achievement Co-Ordinator in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.9 Tutors

The tutor will:

- Take an accurate and timely register during morning registration, marking students as present, absent or late.
- Mark any students arriving after the late bell as late.
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality of students in their tutor groups.
- Discuss concerns about absence or lateness with students and parents/carers, liaising with the Head of Year.
- Raise any concerns regarding attendance or punctuality with the Head of Year.

3.10   School teaching staff

All teaching staff will:

- Take an accurate register within the first five minutes of every lesson, marking students as present, absent or late.
- Inform reception/pastoral team of any student with unexplained absence from their lesson by using the missing student function on ClassCharts.

3.11   Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time, meaning they must attend every day that the school is open.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:55am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide an explanation of their child's absence on the day they return to school following absence if not already provided.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

3.12   Students

Students will:

- Attend school every day on time – arriving at tutor time by 8:35am.
- Attend every timetabled lesson on time.
- Attend lessons after break/lunch time on time.
- Comply with any late sanctions put in place.

- Sign out at reception if they have permission to leave school for an appointment before the end of the school day. They will sign back in on their return.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:35am will be kept open until 8:55am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 2:05pm and will be kept open until 2:25pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:55am or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school office (see also section 7). Notify the school office of the expected length of absence, parent/carer should then contact school daily following this until the pupil returns to school.

The pupil's parents/carers must call 01189574730 to report pupil absence, alternatively they can email admin@hughfaringdon.org.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Parents/Carers will be notified via GroupCall as soon as the school knows your child is absent. This helps school and parents to work together to improve attendance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/Carers must request leave of absence using the form on the school website, or request a form from the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.
- Students are late to school will be issued with a late slip at the gate/main reception and will sit a lunch time detention on the same day.
- Students who are late to school and/or lessons three times in a week will be issued with an after-school detention. This will also be followed by a phone call home by the Head of Year, tutor or pastoral team.

4.5 Children who are absent from education (KCSIE September 2023 Paragraph 175).

'Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child

who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community'.

Our follow up procedures are explained in Section 4.6 below:

4.6 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil expected in school does not attend, or stops attending without reason, the school will:

- GroupCall the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- If by day 3 of absence the school has not reached any of the student's emergency contacts or if having made contact the school has reason to remain concerned, the DSL will be informed and the school may conduct a doorstep check in line with our protocol. The matter will be escalated to the police if necessary.
- The ASW, CME/Safeguarding Team at Brighter Futures and, where the student has been referred to Children's Social Care. the assigned professional. will be kept informed.
- Where the reason for absence is identified and the student continues not to attend, the school will GroupCall the parent/carer on each day of absence, without explanation, to ensure proper safeguarding action (outlined above) is taken where necessary.
- The school's CME procedure will be invoked if/as appropriate.

4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels [for example, via three academic reports per year].

Parents/carers can access their child's attendance via the SIMS and/or Classcharts App. They will also receive three reports over the course of the academic year which will contain data on attendance and punctuality.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Holidays in term time are not considered an exceptional circumstance.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via [REQUEST-FOR-LEAVE-OF-ABSENCE-FORM.pdf (hughfaringdon.org)]. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

5.2 Legal sanctions

Under certain circumstances the school might refer parents/carers to the local authority with the recommendation that a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice) be issued. For example

- Taking unauthorised holiday (or other leave) during term time.
- Repeated absence or lateness which is not explained in writing by a medical professional.
- A long absence which is not explained in writing by a medical professional.

In this event, each parent would be fined for each affected child.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each tutor board will have the school target of 96% up along with the tutors current attendance percentage and number of lates.

The school will have termly celebration assemblies rewarding both individual and tutor groups for both attendance and punctuality.

The school will display the current attendance for each house on the house boards on the A corridor alongside achievement points.

The Head of Year will reward each student with 100% attendance each cycle with achievement points (the 100 Club)

The Head of Year will target those students under 90% attendance, place on an attendance report for six weeks and reward improvement each cycle with achievement points (the 90 club).
The Head of Year, tutor or pastoral support will seek to provide support by working with students and their parents to encourage a more positive attitude towards attendance.

The pastoral team have a positive role in assisting those who are potential school refusers by working with students and their parents/carers.

The pastoral team will support students and parents/carers by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners such as the Education Welfare and safeguarding services) should work together to support students and parents/carers to access any support they may need voluntarily.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.
The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum each academic year by the Assistant Headteacher responsible or attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Late Arrival to school

Minutes late every day during the school year…	…is the equivalent of missing x number of days a year
5	3.4
10	6.9
15	10.3
20	13.8
30	20.7

Students are late if they are not at their tutor room by 8:35am and will be marked with an L on the register.

Registers close at 8:55am, meaning any student arriving after this time is marked on the register using the code U, which counts as an unauthorised absence for the entire morning session.