



# Attendance Policy

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**Principle:**

Blessed Thomas Holford is committed to encouraging all pupils to have excellent attendance and punctuality. We believe this supports their achievement and any absence from school is detrimental.

It is the legal responsibility of parents and carers to ensure good attendance and punctuality and to inform the school of reasons for any absences.

**Reducing absence and persistent absence is a vital and integral part of schools' and local authorities'****work to:**

- Ensure parents/carers are aware of their legal duties to ensure that their child receives a suitable full time education
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

**The school will:**

1. Promote good attendance and punctuality as a key target of school in order to ensure good progress in learning
2. Keep a record of attendance and punctuality
3. Monitor individual pupils' attendance and punctuality, taking relevant action
4. Not authorise holidays from school during term-time.
5. Ensure through our induction information, website and communications with pupils and their parents and carers, that excellent attendance is valued
6. Conduct regular spot checks of punctuality and of attendance
7. Work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure good communication about any absences
8. Be aware that pupils who are absent without good reason can be at risk of anti-social and sometimes criminal behaviour
9. Involve the services of the Education Welfare Department as required to support children back into school and pursue non-attendance

## Evaluation:

The following aspects will be audited annually and the results analysed as part of the school's Behaviour for Learning and Attendance Development Plan in order to inform our practice:

- Regular target setting for individuals, groups and the whole school
- Annual reports to governors
- Regular review in meetings of teachers and pastoral managers
- Review of Education Welfare Officer involvement

## Linked policies:

Behaviour Policy including Anti Bullying Policy, Safeguarding, Attendance, Children Missing from Education, SEN, Teaching and Learning

**Reviewed: August 2020**

**Next review: September 2021**

**Responsible: Head Teacher and Associate Head Teacher / Head of Pastoral**

## Appendix 1: Our Whole-School Approach to Attendance

Our aim is to ensure that school is a welcoming environment so that children are happy and feel safe and that all children's health and emotional well-being needs are met.

There are clear links between regular attendance and positive educational outcomes for students.

Pupils' attendance is a responsibility shared by all school staff and we make sure that parents/carers and students are supported in securing good attendance by caring staff.

Please note that one session is the equivalent to half a school day. If students arrive at school after 9.30am they will be coded on the school register as a 'U' (unauthorised absence after registers close).

### 100 - 98% and/or 0 - 2 Days absence

- Students achieving this level of attendance should be congratulated
- Rewards include house points, whole school rewards events, certificates and trips

### 97 - 96% and/or 4 - 8 Days absence

- Attendance at this level is beginning to cause concern
- FT and or HOH / HoY will have a conversation with the student as an early intervention measure

### 95 - 94% and/or 10 – 12 Days absence

- Attendance at this level is a concern
- DSL and HOH / HoY will meet to ensure the student's needs are being met in school
- HoH / HoY will contact the parents/carers to identify the reasons for absence and to offer support

### 93 - 92% and/or 14 – 16 Days absence

- At this level there is a serious concern over attendance
- The student is at risk of becoming a persistent absentee (PA)
- A referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be made

### **Below 92% and/or 16+ Days absence**

- A meeting will be held with the EWO. HOH, AHT / Head of Pastoral and parents/carers of the student resulting in a parenting contract
- At this level the student is in a high risk group and will be identified as a persistent absentee (PA) when their attendance has fallen to 90%
- The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be very involved at this stage
- HOH / HoY and AHT will consider issuing a FPN and possible First Response or Early Help referral

## **Appendix 2: Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Blessed Thomas Holford College will:**

- Investigate all unexplained and unjustified absence
- Work closely with parents and external agencies should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern.
- Expect staff to set a good example in terms of attendance and punctuality
- Inform the Local Authority (Trafford) of every student who has been continuously absent without a good reason for 10 school days or more at any time during the school year.
- The school will also inform the local authority of every student who fails to attend regularly (which is interpreted to mean those students who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 days of continuous absence) in line with the Guidance on The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Not authorise holidays in term time. If parents decide to take their child on holiday, despite the request for Leave of Absence being declined, they are advised that this may result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice (Fine) under section 444 of the 1996 Act.
- School will report a child missing education to the local authority if a child fails to attend school for 20 consecutive school days and school are unable to ascertain their whereabouts.

### **Pupils will:**

- Ensure that they attend school regularly and on time
- Not leave the school without permission

### **Parents/Carers:**

- Are encouraged to contact the school if they have any concerns about their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by phone call on the morning of any absence before 9.00am.
- Can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record. Letters will be sent home periodically to inform parents if their child's attendance has fallen below national average. It is envisaged this will help families/carers to make the right decisions concerning whether to send their child into school on any given occasion.
- Provide medical evidence to support absence when requested by school.
- Are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance. The school will support them in this duty. If parents wilfully do not discharge this duty they will be held to account

through parenting contracts, Fixed Penalty Notices, Parenting Orders and other means legally at the disposal of the school, governing body and Local Authority.

- Are reminded that for safeguarding purposes and for the proper discharge of our duty of care the parents/guardians should not expect to take their child out of school without prior notice to (a minimum of 48hrs written notice is requested) and authorisation by the school. Under exceptional circumstances, a phone call to the school on the morning before the pupil is taken out of school is the minimum required before the school will permit the leave. All appointments must be supported by evidence.

### Appendix 3: Registration

Registers are taken punctually each day at 09.00 and at the start of each and every lesson.

The member of staff taking the register calls the pupil by name and the pupil has to be seen by the member of staff.

Pupils should be on school premises by 08.55am. Morning registration closes at 9.30am.

Those who arrive in school after 9.00 but before 9.30 will be recorded as late using the register code L.

Pupils who arrive after the close of the register (9.30 and later) will be recorded as absent for the morning session, using the register code U.

Pupils arriving after 9.00am must sign in at Pupil Services.

Pupils arriving after 12.30pm with no valid reason will be reported as absent for that morning using the register code O for unauthorised absence.

### Appendix 4: Authorised and Unauthorised Absence and Persistent Absenteeism

- The High Court has ruled that it is the school which decides whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be away or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.
- Parents are reminded that a letter containing a written explanation does not in itself authorise an absence; only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter / absence request form authorises the absence.
- In the event that the school has reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

#### **Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:**

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance (requested in advance)
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement
- Study leave
- Exclusion
- Traveller child travelling

- A child caring for a sick or disabled family member (authorisation should, in such instances, be of limited duration)
- Involvement in a public performance
- 'Special' occasions (the nature of such special occasions will be determined by schools on an individual basis)
- Lateness (when the child arrives after the register has closed and offers a satisfactory explanation).

**Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable. Absence from school will not be authorised for:**

- Shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Family holidays

**Absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:**

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc.);
- Family holidays
- Lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed and fails to offer a satisfactory explanation
- 'Special' occasions (when the school does not agree that leave should be given).

### **Persistent Absence:**

Nationally Persistent absenteeism (or PA) is broadly equivalent to 10% or more absence. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore if their attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised). However, at Blessed Thomas Holford College, we take all absence seriously and we have defined 'at risk of PA' as 94% or below. In addition, pupils whose attendance falls below 98% become the focus of interest and monitoring.

## Appendix 5: Procedures for Following up Absence and Lateness

Should a pupil be absent at morning registration, unless a message explaining the absence has been received, the Attendance Officer will attempt that day to make contact with the pupil's home.

All notes from parents regarding a pupils absence will be recorded on SIMS.

Should a pupil return to school after an absence without a written explanation from his/her parent and one is not forthcoming, and school has been unable to contact parents by phone on subsequent days, then the Attendance Officer will write to the parents. The pupil may also face a sanction for truancy.

After three consecutive days of absence school will contact home for an update on the child's condition and may refer to the EWO for a home visit.

Persistent poor punctuality is regarded as a behaviour issue and could result in sanctions, referral to Behaviour Panel or exclusion.

When a pupil is persistently late or absent without good reason and the school's efforts to effect improvement have been unsuccessful, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the Local Authority via the Education Welfare Officer.

The school reserves the right to apply all legal instruments at its disposal to ensure the highest levels of punctuality and attendance amongst its pupils. This may include using parenting contracts, Parenting Orders and Fixed Penalty notices (See Appendix 1).

## Appendix 6: Register Codes

**The DCSF offers a comprehensive set of register codes which all schools are required to use. These codes are as follows:**

/ \ - Present am/pm

B - Educated off site - Approved Educational Activity.

C - Other authorised circumstances (including public performances licensed by the local authority, family bereavements, exceptional special occasions) - Authorised Absence.

D - Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment) - Approved Educational Activity.

E - Excluded (no alternative provision made) - Authorised Absence.

F - Extended family holiday (agreed) - Authorised Absence.

G - Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement) - Unauthorised Absence.

H - Family holiday during term-time (provided this has been agreed by the school) - Authorised Absence.

I - Illness (not medical/dental appointments) - Authorised Absence.

J - Interview - Approved Educational Activity.

- L - Late (before registers close) - Present.
- M - Medical/Dental appointments - Authorised Absence.
- N - No reason yet provided for absence - Unauthorised Absence.
- O - Unauthorised Absence.
- P - Approved Sporting Activity - Approved Educational Activity - Present.
- R - Religious Observance - Authorised Absence.
- S - Study Leave - Authorised Absence.
- T - Traveller child travelling - Authorised Absence.
- U - Late after registers close without an acceptable explanation - Unauthorised Absence
- V - Educational visit or trip - Approved Educational Activity - Present.
- W - Work Experience - Approved Educational Activity. X - Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances.
- Y - Enforced closure – not counted in possible attendances.
- Z - Student not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances.
- # - School closed – not counted in possible attendance.