



BLESSED THOMAS HOLFORD
CATHOLIC COLLEGE
Inspiring People – Changing Lives

Attendance Policy

This policy was approved by the Governing body on: 12th January 2022

This policy will be reviewed annually, on or before: 12th January 2023

1 Aim of this policy

To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College.

2 Key principles

- High levels of attendance and punctuality are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the School to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The School

We will:

- work with pupils and their families to support high levels of attendance and punctuality
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate
- work with the local authority and, where required, make appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance
- regularly review and analyse attendance levels and set targets for the future
- ensure that all of its pupils can access full-time education
- ensure that the governors and School's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in its policies and procedures
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to our Child Protection & Safeguarding policy - [Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy](#))
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- support pupils who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place.

3.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at the School on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the School (see section 6.1 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the School informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.3 below)
- inform the School in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live.

3.3 Pupils

We expect pupils to:

- attend the School regularly and on time
- be punctual to all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the School late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

4 Registration

- 4.1 The School maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each pupil's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Registration session	Registers close at
Morning	9.30am
Afternoon	2.15pm

- 4.2 Pupils who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Pupils who arrive after the end of the registration session will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation is provided and must follow the process set out in section 5 below.
- 4.3 The register is marked using the national attendance and absence codes which can be found in the Department for Education's guidance on School Attendance guidance - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf
- 4.4 Where a pupil attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the behaviour policy and engage parents where necessary.

5 Late arrival

- 5.1 If a pupil arrives at the School after the relevant registration period has ended, he/she must immediately go to pupil services to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- 5.2 Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with behaviour policy.

6 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

- 6.1 **Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where the School has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the School can authorise absence.
- 6.2 **Unauthorised absence** - absence will be marked as unauthorised where the School is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

6.3 Reporting absence from the School

- 6.3.1 Where a pupil is to be absent from the School without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the School by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the School know when they expect the pupil to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the School on each day of absence.
- 6.3.2 On the day of return to the School, parents must also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence.
- 6.3.3 In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the parents/cares may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor. If this evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

6.4 Appointments

- 6.4.1 Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.
- 6.4.2 Where an appointment must take place during school time, the pupil should attend the School for as much of the day as possible.
- 6.4.3 For the time absent from the School to be marked as an authorised, confirmation of the appointment by way of an appointment card or letter must be provided.

6.5 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)

- 6.5.1 Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupils out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. The School will only authorise a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances.
- 6.5.2 To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- 6.5.3 Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Headteacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
- will be confirmed in writing

- is solely at the Headteacher’s discretion and
 - is final.
- 6.5.4 Where permission is granted, the Headteacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- 6.5.5 If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the School, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

6.6 Religious observance

- 6.6.1 We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:
- falls during school time and
 - has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs,
- the absence from the School will be authorised.
- 6.6.2 We ask that parents/carers notify the School in writing in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

7 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

- 7.1 Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found here (Children Missing Education Annex)
- 7.2 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:
- a pattern of unauthorised absence
 - a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
 - persistent truancy or lateness
- we will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.
- 7.3 Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- 7.4 Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place a parenting contract. At BTHCC we expect pupil attendance to be at least 96%.
- 7.5 Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the School, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine (£60 if paid within 21 days, £120 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents.
- 7.6 When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- the Department for Education’s statutory guidance, School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures.
- the local authority’s Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.

7.7 In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.