

**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC COLLEGE**

**Attendance (Students) Policy**



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| <b>Reviewed by:</b>        | P Hanrahan/V Muir/T Ward | <b>Date:</b> 23-11-18 |
| <b>Last reviewed on:</b>   | Feb 2017                 |                       |
| <b>Next review due by:</b> | December 2019            |                       |

## **1.0 Purpose of Policy/Procedure/Guidance:**

Our mission in this college is to provide an excellent education for all our students. We expect that all students attend St. Francis of Assisi College in order, to learn and to further develop their faith and work hard in a Catholic environment.

Striving for excellence is part of our spirituality; we must try to become the best we can, whatever our talents and abilities.

A central expectation is that every child has a minimum attendance record of 97.5% (exceptional circumstances excluded).

## **2.0 Definitions and Abbreviations:**

EWO – Education Welfare Officer

HAL – Head of Achievement and Learning

*Understanding Your Child's Absence and Attendance Profile* – See **Appendix One**

## **3.0 Processes and Procedures:**

- Ensure that every child makes at least good progress by regularly attending school
- Encourage a positive approach to attendance and punctuality
- Challenge and reduce levels of authorised and unauthorised absences
- Promote a consistent approach by all staff
- Regularly monitor attendance and set realistic targets for improvement
- Recognise and reward good attendance
- Emphasise to parents and students the link between attendance and attainment
- Provide clearly defined procedures and expectations that are easily understood by all
- Track, monitor, analyse and act upon attendance concerns through the use of a caseload (focussing on known poor attenders and vulnerable groups).

## **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities:**

See Appendix Two

## **5.0 Legislative Information:**

As a “Good” school with “Outstanding features”, we recognise that the following are indicators of a successful educational establishment:

- Treat attendance as a priority within the school community
- Have a clear policy on absence
- Use systems effectively for monitoring attendance
- Use data and other information to improve school and student performance
- Promote the importance of good attendance to students and their parent/carers
- Intervene early when individual student absence gives cause for concern
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance
- Make use of additional support for students and parents with greatest need

## 6.0 Associated Policies/References:

Safeguarding Procedures

## 7.0 Appendices and Contacts:

- Appendix One - *Understanding Your Child's Absence and Attendance Profile*
- Appendix Two – *Roles and Responsibilities*
- Appendix Three – Policy notes for Website

### Appendix 1

#### Understanding your child's absence and attendance profile

The following codes are used by St. Francis when recording absence or attendance.

|    |   |
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| /\ | Student is present during a.m. and p.m.   |
| B  | Student is attending an approved educational activity off-site.   |
| C  | Student is absent from school. Absence is authorised by school.   |
| D  | Student has dual registration and is attending other establishment.   |
| E  | Student is excluded from school. This is an authorised absence.   |
| G  | Family Holiday taken but not agreed with school or in excess of agreed time. This is an unauthorised absence.   |
| H  | Family Holiday agreed with school in advance. This is an authorised absence.  |
| I  | Illness (not medical or dental appointments) This is an authorised absence.   |
| J  | Student is attending an approved interview with an educational establishment. This is an approved attendance.   |
| L  | Student is present but arrived late before the registers were closed.   |
| M  | Student attends medical or dental appointment and misses registration. This is an authorised absence provided evidence is shown to the child's tutor. |
| N  | No reason has yet been provided for absence. This is an unauthorised absence.   |
| O  | An unauthorised absence not covered by any other code. Examples- birthday/shopping/hair cut etc.  |
| P  | Student is attending an approved sporting activity. This counts as an attendance mark.  |
| R  | Student is taking part in a day set aside for religious observance. This is an authorised absence.  |
| S  | Student is on approved study leave from school. This is an authorised absence.  |
| T  | Student is a member of a travelling family. This is an authorised absence.  |
| U  | Student is late after registration is closed (Usually after 30 minutes). This counts as an unauthorised absence.                                      |
| V  | Student is attending an approved educational visit or trip. This counts as an attendance mark.  |
| W  | Student is attending an approved Work Experience activity. This counts as an attendance mark.   |
| X  | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students.   |
| Y  | Student cannot attend school because of an enforced closure. Examples- floods, snow, burst boiler etc. This is not counted for attendance purposes.   |
| Z  | Student was not on the school role at this time.  |

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| # | Student is not required to attend as the school is closed to them. Not counted in attendance data. |
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## **Appendix 2**

### **Student Attendance Policy – Roles and Responsibilities**

Every student has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Students, parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at St. Francis of Assisi College are maximised and that rates of unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

As a college we recognise that punctual and regular attendance alongside high standards of behaviour is an essential prerequisite to effective learning and we are therefore committed to improving levels of attendance, punctuality and positive behaviour.

The college actively promotes a teaching and learning ethos which encourages all students to attend whatever their level of ability or need.

#### **Teachers should:**

- Set an example of excellent attendance and punctuality at all times
- Ensure that registers are accurately completed at morning and afternoon sessions and individual lessons.
- Codes which require an action must be followed up, by the tutor, within a suitable time frame
- Challenge poor attendance and punctuality by following up any suspected infringements on a daily basis contacting parents/carer as necessary
- Ensure that attendance checks during all lessons are carried out in accordance with school policy and respond immediately to any suspected internal truancy by informing the School Attendance Officer
- Inform HALs and office staff of any suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence immediately and contact parents/carers
- Implement appropriate college sanctions to challenge non-attendance or poor punctuality
- Maintain accurate records of letters and phone calls from home ensuring that the correct codes for absence are recorded in roll call
- Promote excellent attendance by highlighting college targets
- Celebrate excellent attendance in tutor groups and assemblies
- Reward excellent attendance through the issuing of commendations, certificates and prizes to individuals and tutor groups
- Encourage students to arrive punctually at all registration, assemblies and classes through being actively involved in moving students from the playground, dining room, corridors and field. (Staff on morning duty, break duty and lunch duty have a special responsibility in these situations)
- Make sure that their students are released on time to allow them to arrive punctually at their next lesson.

**Parent/Carers should:**

- Ensure their child attends college regularly and punctually
- Ensure that they contact college as soon as is reasonably practical to do so whenever their child is unable to attend
- Send a note/letter with their child when he/she returns to college following an absence
- Ensure that their child arrives in college well prepared for the working day having the necessary equipment with them and having completed their homework
- Contact staff in confidence whenever any problem occurs that affects their child's ability to attend college regularly and punctually or affects their ability to perform effectively. **(N.B.** This may include family illnesses or difficult circumstances)
- Respond quickly to any problems/concerns raised by college concerning their child's attendance or punctuality
- Never condone their child's absence from college unless it is absolutely necessary. **N.B.** Slight colds/illnesses, shopping, birthdays, trips out and holidays are not acceptable reasons for absence. Medical and dental appointments should be arranged **OUTSIDE** normal college times. If appointments **HAVE** to be taken during school hours, please contact school via telephone or student's planner. A copy of appointment card or letter if possible.
- Support any college sanctions that have been applied to their child to ensure improved attendance or punctuality
- Check attendance reports to ensure that they are an accurate record of their child's attendance at college and inform staff of any errors/concerns that have been noted
- Expect contact from the college if their child is absent and there has been no explanation from home.
- Expect a communication or visit from the Education Welfare Officer should any pattern of regular poor punctuality, unexplained absence or condoned absence be noted or suspected with regard to their child.

**Students should:**

- Attend regularly. **N.B.** Slight colds/illnesses, shopping, birthdays, trips out and holidays are not acceptable reasons for absence. Medical and dental appointments should be arranged **OUTSIDE** normal college times. If appointments **HAVE** to be taken during school hours please have a note in your planner and a copy of appointment card or letter if possible.
- Arrive on time for the start of the college day being appropriately prepared for a day of work
- Ensure that they attend all roll call periods and the start of each lesson punctually, making sure that their attendance has been recorded by their teacher
- Be aware of their own attendance profile and whether they are meeting their target (minimum 95%)
- Follow procedures for the recording of their late arrival at the college reception desk by completing the late book
- Ask their parents/carers to inform college of the reason for their absence by telephoning college at their earliest opportunity
- Draw their tutor's attention to the reason for absence
- Strive to catch up with any work missed as a result of absence from college
- Expect to be given sanctions for poor punctuality or truancy and their parents/carers informed of the reason for the sanction
- Inform their tutor or HAL of any reasons why they are unable to improve their attendance or punctuality so that assistance may be given as necessary

**Parents are requested to ensure that reasons for absence are always provided. A student with many unauthorised absences is likely to present a poor profile of themselves to future employers.**

**Further action will be taken with the EWO when students' attendance falls below target.**

**Responding to non-attendance or lateness:**

- Parents/carers contact college at their earliest opportunity if their child is absent or likely to be arriving late. A telephone call is preferred. This can be recorded as an answer phone message. Please state clearly your child's name, year group and tutor group. Then give the reason for absence or lateness. **(College telephone number is 01922 740300)**
- As lateness is recorded, HALs will issue an afterschool detention for any student who is consistently late.
- If the student is listed on the Education Welfare Officer caseload i.e. there are existing attendance concerns, an unauthorised code will be listed for the absence unless sufficient evidence is provided to prove otherwise.
- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents/carers, the College will attempt to contact them on the first day of absence by telephone or by letter if they are not on the telephone.
- **Where there is no response, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer, who will then take the appropriate action.**
- Where non-attendance or poor punctuality continues, the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer for College and further action will be planned.
- Parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting in College. This meeting will include the appropriate HAL, parents and student and will aim to identify and solve problems that are preventing the student from attending College or arriving punctually.
- Attendance meetings are held with EWO and students in school.
- **If there is no improvement the case will be discussed again with the Education Welfare Officer with a view to a formal referral being made to the Local Authority.**
- **Further unexplained absence or poor punctuality may result in parents/carers making a court appearance and facing fines.**

### **Term Time Extended Leave**

The law says that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for extended leave during term-time.

In exceptional circumstances only, the Headteacher may allow parents to take their child out of class for up to five days in the school year. This will not be granted if your child's attendance is poor or if it is at a time when examinations are about to be taken. If you have no choice over the date of the leave (for example, through a work rota) permission may be given if proof of the exceptional circumstances that meet the criteria is provided well in advance of the leave date.

Parents **must** write a letter to the Headteacher and submit this for consideration before any leave is booked. Please supply written evidence which will support your case.

Your request will be considered and you will be notified of the Headteacher's decision as soon as possible. If the request is refused a copy of your letter will be forwarded to the Education Welfare Service. If leave is then taken when permission has been refused or taken without seeking authorisation a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

If you take time from school without the Headteacher's permission, or if your child fails to return on the agreed date, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence (truancy), and noted on your child's

Attendance Certificate and you **could also receive a £60 fine per parent, per child**. If a child has 4 days consecutive absences without medical evidence you **could also receive a £60 fine per parent, per child**. **If a child has 3 sporadic absences that are unauthorised you could be issued with a fixed penalty warning letter.**

**A Fixed Penalty Notice is issued for £60 (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days, otherwise increasing to £120 after 28 days.**

**N.B. Non-payment of fines results in a court appearance.**

### **Appendix 3**

#### Motive

Attending school and lessons regularly and being punctual enables students to make the most of every minute of learning time. Any absence or lateness will result in the loss of valuable learning time and this can seriously disadvantage your child. It is also important that these personal attributes are developed in order to foster lifelong skills he/she will need to succeed in school and beyond. Your child needs to arrive in school by 8.50 a.m. at the latest as school begins at 8.55 a.m. If your child arrives at school after this time, he/she will need to report to the front office and sign in the late register.

#### Our Aims

- To promote the importance of, and encourage, regular attendance and good punctuality in order to ensure students achieve their full potential.
- To raise awareness of the negative impact of poor attendance and poor punctuality on student's academic progress.
- To support students and parents with any issues relating to attendance and punctuality.

#### How you can help us achieve these aims

- Try to make medical appointments outside of school hour or during the holidays.
- Holidays during term time should be avoided. This type of absence is extremely disruptive, not only to the absent pupil, but also to other pupils in the teaching sets. An application for holiday leave must be made in writing to the Headteacher. Holidays taken during term time are not an entitlement and any holiday taken in this way will adversely affect your child's education and attendance record. Walsall MBC has the authority to fine parents/carers a £60 per child per parent for holidays taken during term time.
- Ensure your child is organised for school and ready to leave the house in good time to arrive at school by 8.50am as the school day starts at 8.55am.
- If you are bringing your child to school by car allow enough time for unexpected problems with traffic.
- If your child travels by bus ensure they are at their bus stop in good time.
- Work in partnership with us to solve issues relating to poor attendance and poor timekeeping.

- If your child is absent from school notify us before 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence by contacting us directly on 01922 740300 (or as soon as possible)
- Notify us in writing or by telephone if your child must leave school during the school day for any reason. Your child must be collected in person from the schools front office.

Absences can only be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical appointment
- Funerals
- Traumatic events.

#### How we will help you

If there is a problem regarding your child's attendance or punctuality, please let us know and we will do our very best to help resolve the problem. In the first instance you are advised to speak to your child's form Tutor or HAL or Student Support (Attendance).

The Government has now set attendance targets for pupils at school. The target for all secondary schools is: "for all pupils to achieve a minimum of 90% attendance."

Pupils with less than 90% attendance are liable to face legal proceedings

A student with an attendance record of 90% attendance equates to a student being absent from lessons for the equivalent of:

- ☐ Half a day every week
- ☐ Four whole weeks of lessons per year
- ☐ Half a year over five years

