



Blessed Robert Sutton
Catholic Voluntary Academy

Attendance Policy

This policy explains our aim of the policy, the roles and responsibilities within school in the implementation of the policy and our intervention to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality.

This policy has been updated to include important coronavirus (COVID-19) updates.

GDPR & Data Protection

Data will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation

Matthew 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

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Blessed Robert Sutton is a Catholic school. Our mission is to work in partnership with parents and carers to provide a great Catholic education for all our young people.

Our mission statement is:

‘Academic excellence, spiritual development and social awareness through Christ’

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Vision and Values of Blessed Robert Sutton Catholic Voluntary Academy

Blessed Robert Sutton is a Catholic school. Our mission is to work in partnership with parents and carers to provide a great Catholic education for all our young people.

Our mission statement is

'Academic excellence, spiritual development and social awareness through Christ'



This means:

- Inspiring and motivating young people to follow 'The Sutton Way' and achieve their full potential academically, spiritually, socially and in a full range of extra-curricular activities
- Developing in young people a deep knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith
- Practising Gospel values (Work Hard. Be Kind. Do the right thing), such as forgiveness and helping those in need, within our school community and in society as a whole.

Our mission statement has been embedded across our school community and permeate all areas of school life.

This policy is to complement our vision and values.

Principles

- It is the school's aspiration that all children should attend school punctually every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. This will enable them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community and society as a whole.
- The school will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- The school will act swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual pupils should this become concern.
- The school will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- The school will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a pupil's attendance and will involve representatives of other external support agencies in order to ensure all pupils can benefit from regular good punctuality and attendance.
- Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence. Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation but as part of a continuum that underpins all other policies relating to the wellbeing of children including Safeguarding, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, E-Safety and Support for Children with Medical Needs.

School Responsibilities

- To promote positive behaviour and attendance through curriculum and learning materials and recognise and celebrate good attendance appropriately.
- To work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a pupil's attendance and involve representatives of other external agencies where appropriate in order to ensure all pupils can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance.
- To be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils by ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To act swiftly and intervene to improve attendance and/or punctuality of individual pupils should this become a concern.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities

- To ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and on time.
- To inform school straight away if their child cannot attend and give the reason.
- To try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- To ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their child's attendance.
- To encourage good routines for their child at home which promote a healthy lifestyle, including enough sleep
- To talk to their child about school and let the school know if the child is worried about any issues which may affect their attendance.
- To not book holidays in term time – these will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

- To seek advice from the GP if they are not sure how long to keep their child away from school with an illness.
- To ensure school has up to date contact details.
- To encourage their child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

The Importance of Good Attendance and its link to Achievement

An excellent attendance record is important for all pupils for the following reasons:

- 90% attendance may sound good. However, this is the equivalent of missing a half day of schooling EACH WEEK. If this continues over the 5 years a child spends at secondary school, a child with 90% attendance will miss HALF A YEAR'S schooling. A child with 80% attendance will lose A FULL YEAR of schooling over the same period.
- Taking your child out of school for a two week holiday during term time immediately reduces their attendance to 95% for the year.
- Poor attendance has a direct link to attainment – the more school a child misses, the less likely they are to achieve good exam grades.
- Good exam grades increase an individual's earning potential. Pupils who leave school with 5 GCSE grade 8/9's will, over the course of their lifetime, earn on average £350,000 more than those that leave with 5 grade 4's.
- Children with 90% or lower attendance are categorised by the Government as 'Persistently Absent' pupils.
- Only 10% of persistently absent pupils achieve 5 GCSE's with grades between 5 and 9, compared with 58% for other pupils.
- 21% of persistently absent pupils will leave school with no qualifications at all.

Attendance is a key factor in your child achieving well at school. Pupils who miss lessons as a result of being taken on holiday during term time often never catch up on the work they miss, despite efforts made by their teachers, and this can have a direct effect on their GCSE grades, particularly in years 10 and 11. We strongly urge all our parents and carers to think carefully before taking their child out of school for holidays and routine appointments.

Pupils may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, this should be discussed with the school as soon as possible.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the case of each absence is always required in writing. A Leave of Absence request form must be completed and submitted to the Headteacher before any planned absence is taken. Any absences that are not requested before the due date cannot be authorised, even in exceptional circumstances. A Leave of Absence form is available from the School Reception or downloadable from the school website.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes. Wherever possible, routine medical check-ups, such as dental appointments or doctor's appointments, should be made for times outside of the school day.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:-

- *Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily*
- *Truancy before or during the school day*
- *Absences which have never been properly explained*
- *Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark*
- *Holiday or extensions to a holiday that are not agreed*

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together as this is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the pupil to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) from the Local Education Authority. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or a prosecution under the 1996 Education Act.

The Penalty Notice fine would be:-

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996.

If the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact the EWS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting their Local Education Authority.

Procedures

The school will apply the following procedures when deciding how it will deal with individual absences:-

- Absences are recorded using the codes required by the DfE (Department for Education).
- Operating a first day calling system through which parents are contacted at the earliest opportunity to find out why a pupil has not arrived in school.
- Parents are requested to inform the school at the earliest opportunity, preferably on the first day of absence, if a pupil is absent from school.
- If no letter of explanation is received then the school will contact parents to confirm the reason for absence. Communication by phone or preferably a letter is required by the day a child returns to school. Email is also acceptable.
- Dual-registered pupils or those attending alternative provision will have their attendance confirmed by the staff supporting them on a weekly basis.
- Headteachers are no longer able to authorise the absences for holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is because the Department for Education expects schools and Local Authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absences.

- The Government has made changes to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Parents may incur a fine if they take unauthorised leave, as outlined on page 2.
- The school will monitor punctuality. If a pupil arrives after 8.25am, a late mark will be annotated to their register. Sanctions can be issued for lateness. If there is an exceptional reason why a child may be late on a regular basis, parents should contact the school to discuss this.
- The Inclusion team will perform weekly checks on whole school attendance. Form Tutors and Year Leaders receive daily updates regarding attendance.
- Attendance Information will be issued to the Headteachers and the Governors when requested.
- The EWS can periodically conduct register checks and advise the school of best practice. Those managing attendance will liaise with the EWS on a more regular basis and initiate referrals for specific pupils of concern accordingly.

Information about Individual School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:-

- The attendance is monitored by the Inclusion Team.
- Parents will be advised periodically of their child's attendance and some parents are asked to attend meetings in school to discuss their child's attendance.
- Parents of pupils with either prolonged or regular absences will be referred by the school to the EWS.
- The school will pursue GP access certificates and fines as necessary with the support of the EWS.

Teaching staff will be made aware of persistent absentees to help them to offer return to class support. More intensive monitoring will take place and parents invited into school to meet with key staff. Notifications warning parents of low attendance levels will be sent earlier in the year at a 96% threshold and 90% is considered to be Persistent Absence. Rewards to improve attendance have been introduced.

Referral to the Education Welfare Service

Support from the EWS is sought for a variety of reasons but primarily because of a young person's irregular attendance at school.

Duty to Refer

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006: the school has a duty to refer to the Local Authority if a pupil of compulsory school age is continuously absent from school for two weeks without explanation, or if his/her attendance is irregular. This is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 days continual absence.

All non-attendance should raise concerns: whether covered by a note or not – it is the

Headteacher's responsibility to authorise an absence. The EWS should be aware of concerns teachers have about irregular attendance that is covered by parents – this is 'condoned absence'. The school will therefore consider TOTAL absences when making a referral.

What constitutes an appropriate referral?

- Any irregular attendance or continuous absence over two weeks, which has not been resolved satisfactorily, following schools investigation.
- Regular late arrival at school, which has not been resolved satisfactorily, following investigation.
- Any social/welfare/behaviour concerns that impact on regular attendance of a pupil.
- Teenage pregnancy, as it is important that 'suitable education is maintained both during and after pregnancy'. There is a DfE requirement on the LA to collect data on the participation and achievement of all pupils absent from school for this reason.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- The use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.
- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year.
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- The presence of an excluded pupil in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of following criteria is met

- For unauthorised holiday absence – a minimum requirement is 2 sessions of unauthorised holiday absence.
- Persistent unauthorised absence - a minimum of 20 sessions and absences do not have to be consecutive. The absences must all be within the previous 12 weeks of school.
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed, in the current and previous term. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of late arrival. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Admissions Register

The school records the date that each pupil joined the school and their personal details. The school can only remove a pupil's name from this register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education.

- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- Have a medical condition certified by a qualified medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

School will notify the Local Authority in advance of any deletion.

Legal Framework

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year)(England) Regulations 1999
- The Education Act 2002 and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education Act 2005
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders)(England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices)(England) Regulations 2007 and amendments
- The Education and Skills Act 2008
- Equality Act 2010

Useful Contacts

School Attendance: 01283 749466
attendance@robertsutton.staffs.sch.uk

Attendance Manager: Susan Rowe - 01283 749481
Email: Su.Rowe@robertsutton.staffs.sch.uk

Education Welfare Service: 01283 239671

Stapenhill Local Support Team: 01283 239671
Email: EastStaffsLST@staffordshire.gov.uk

Staffordshire County Council: www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education

Derbyshire County Council: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education

Leicestershire: www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education