Bellerive FCJ Catholic College Attendance Policy

Bellerive FCJ Mission Statement:

- To help everyone within a caring community to grow in faith
- To respect and value other cultures and faiths
- To make the most of every given ability
- To enjoy and achieve personal growth and academic excellence
- To prepare pupils for their adult life, playing a full part in a modern global society

History of Document

Issue No	Author/Owner	Date Written	To Governors	Date Approved	Comments
1	J Westwood	04/09/2020			

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- 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.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

This should be done by ringing school and choosing option 1 to report a pupil absence. A text message will be sent to the priority 1 contact number held by the school if we have not been informed about the reason for a pupil's absence by the time the register is closed. Parents/carers should then ring on each subsequent day of absence if it goes beyond 1 day.

Absence due to illness will be authorised once we have received the reason for the absence from the parent/carer.

If there are concerns regarding overall attendance, the school may ask parents 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 these concerns persist and the pupil's attendance drops to 90% or below, without clear evidence for the absences, the school may decide to stop authorising absences for this pupil.

The decision to unauthorise an absence is at the discretion of the school and parents will be notified of this.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. An appointment slip/card should be presented when the pupil signs out/returns to school.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Pupils should see their Head of Year in advance to get permission to sign out of school early/arrive at school late for any medical appointments. Only their Head of Year/member of SLT can give permission for the pupil to leave school at any time.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Pupils who are persistently late will be identified and monitored by their Head of Year. Our punctuality procedures will be followed and they could be subject to after school detention, Saturday morning detention and, where there is no improvement, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers are informed of their daughter's attendance in each termly reporting cycle. Our school target for attendance is 97%; parents/carers will receive a letter should their daughter's attendance reach 95% and again if it reaches 93%. If attendance drops below 93% parents/carers may be invited into school to meet with their daughter's Head of Year/Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Officer.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

- 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.

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- When a term time holiday is taken which has not been granted by the headteacher.

- An absence for which there has been no absence note received from parents/carers.

- Absences with no supporting medical evidence where this has been requested (this will have been previously communicated to parents/carers through the attendance monitoring procedures).

The decision to unauthorise an absence is at the school's discretion.

Attendance monitoring procedures:

The following procedures will be followed to support your daughter in maintaining the school's target of 97% attendance:

Attendance Flowchart

97%	95%	93%	90%	85%

97% → Pupils to be spoken to by Form Tutor about their attendance and reminded of the importance of maintaining good attendance throughout the year.

95% → 95% notification letter to be sent home to parents/carers.
→ HOY/AHOY to speak to pupil about their attendance and inform them that an improvement is needed otherwise an attendance card will be issued/daily checks will commence.

93% → 93% notification letter to be sent home to parents/carers.
→ AHOY/HOY to issue attendance card/introduce daily checks.
→ EWO referral to be made
→ Parents/carers to be invited in for a meeting to explain PA category and potential consequences if no improvement is seen.

90% → PA notification letter to be sent home to parents/carers.
→ Parents to be invited in for a 2nd meeting. Improvement plan to be agreed. Consideration of need for external agencies if necessary.
→ PN to be considered.

85% → Parents to be asked to attend Attendance Contract meeting with AO/HOY. Timeline for improvement to be agreed.
→ Consideration be given to prosecution if no improvement shown.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as but not exclusively, holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school we employ a range of strategies to promote good attendance. Our attendance target for all pupils is 97% and we ensure we communicate regularly with parents/carers if a pupil's attendance is falling below this standard. Heads of Year monitor pupils' attendance weekly and they are responsible for organising and implementing a range of incentives/rewards to recognise those who are reaching the expected attendance target, and those who have made significant improvements.

The school is supported in its efforts to promote attendance by our Attendance Office, Kayte Walsh and Education Welfare Officer, Alison Griffiths. The senior leader with responsibility for attendance is Jenni Westwood, Deputy Headteacher.

6. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). The school should be informed of the expected period of absence or should be contacted daily for the duration of the absence.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If, after contacting parents, a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

7.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Form tutors are responsible for monitoring attendance and holding supportive conversation with pupils with the aim of improving/maintaining attendance percentages.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system using correct codes.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the senior leader responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding 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