



Our Lady and St Chad Catholic Academy

ACADEMY POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE

Mission Statement

GROWING TOGETHER IN CHRIST

TRUTH, JUSTICE, CHARITY, FORGIVENESS, LOVE AND PEACE

Christ is the centre of our school.
He calls us all; pupils, parents, staff and
Governors to co-operate fully
in the building of a community where individuals
are treasured
and able to grow to full potential
in the love of Christ.

We will put into practice the values of truth,
justice, charity, forgiveness,
love and peace, as we live our daily lives together.
We will reach out to others to do what is good
with a loving concern.

The Senior Teacher with responsibility for Attendance Management - Mr P. Senese.

The implementation of the Attendance policy is in accordance with the aims of the Mission Statement and in consideration of the basic principles of the Equal Opportunities policy and of all other Academy policies.

Full school attendance is the foundation upon which we can encourage full participation in every aspect of Academy life and so achieve our Mission Statement ideals with the students of the Academy.

We acknowledge and reward high levels of attendance as a key aspect of achievement. Review and Guidance Sessions and Target setting will always include aspects of attendance and punctuality. Absenteeism is the result of a number of complex issues connected with school, the community and

the quality of relationships in the school. The school must be sensitive to the individual needs of each poor attender.

In practical terms we will adopt strategies and procedures that foster the development of high standards of attendance and punctuality. We will forge and foster a partnership between home and school to achieve these goals and strive for a curriculum which engages all our students.

Home School Agreement

This policy exists within the remit of the Home School Agreement. Parents can expect school to support them in order to maximise students' attendance. Students can expect school to be a place where they feel safe and content and where their needs are met.

Quick Response to Absence

We expect parents to inform us of reasons for non attendance on the day of absence and everyday thereafter. Telephone calls or notes are acceptable. In most cases authorisation of the said absence will NOT be granted unless medical evidence is provided, examples of medical evidence are dated medical appointment card, prescription or doctors note.

If school receives no contact from home a combination of the following steps will be taken:

- a first day of absence truancy text
- a home visit from the school attendance team
- phone call from one of the following – Behaviour and Welfare Mentor (BWM) , Attendance team, SEN staff. Calls will be co-ordinated by the School Attendance Team
- check referral to EWO after one week and request home visit if necessary
- consecutive absence of two or more days with no parental contact will always result in a home visit by the Attendance Team of EWO

Everyone has a role to play in achieving full attendance for the maximum number of students.

As House Tutors-:

- ensuring quality registration and accurate record keeping, **promptly updated**. It is vital that reasons for absences are passed to Attendance Clerk
- complete absence report weekly

- make sure students know their current attendance percentage and targets by asking them to complete stickers
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- provide pastoral support and good home/school contact, in conjunction with school team and Attendance team, for likely absentees
- Refer persistent late comers to school team and Attendance team and request strategies, sanctions and rewards for improvement
- set attendance targets for all students of 97% in the first instance
- reward improved attendance in conjunction with Epraise and other reward systems

As Behaviour and Welfare Mentor (BWM) & Key Stage Leader (KSL) -

- provide pastoral support in conjunction to House Tutor
- liaise with home to report and improve on poor attendance
- ensure House Tutors complete absence reports efficiently
- report all student absence who are a concern to Attendance team before 10am each morning
- formerly meet Attendance Team Lead weekly to scrutinise all students under 95% and create action plans
- instruct attendance team to make home visits for all students below 90%
- organise parental meetings for all students at risk of Persistent Absence and provide personal action plans.
- attend weekly EWO attendance meetings with Senior Attendance Officer and prepare/monitor year group attendance analysis
- ensure high profile of attendance and related issues through assemblies and praise system
- with House Tutor and Attendance team identify those students vulnerable with regard to attendance and put support strategies in place e.g. home contact, teacher mentor, support of EWO, LSA's, SenCo, Early Help Assessments
- ensure cover House Tutors, for duration of 3 days or more, authorise absences
- present certificates for 100% attendance and significant improvement at Praise Assemblies and Presentation Evening.
- Manage classroom checks as directed by Attendance Officer

As Subject Teachers and Leaders:-

- strive to enable all to engage in and succeed in the curriculum

- keep lesson registers
- analyse subject specific attendance reports to identify patterns of absence, informing Attendance Team
- Heads of Departments monitor use of lesson registers. Apply class and departmental sanctions for unexplained lateness to lessons - insist on late slip or explanatory notes from teacher.

Attendance Administration Staff::-

- manage classroom checks as directed by Senior Attendance Manager and Year Leaders
- produce OMR registers, absence reports and weekly historic registers.
- keep accurate record of telephone authorisation and amend registers
- update school information systems for high priority students, document action / notes for all intervention strategies
- manage daily truancy call
- manage and distribute Head teacher's letters once student attendance hit the following triggers:
 - 95% Letter 1 (Warning 1 – notification of concern)
 - 92% Letter 2 (Warning 2 – insisting on parental meeting, setting of targets and offering Early Help Assessments)
 - 90% Letter 3 (Notification of Education Welfare involvement and possible legal proceedings)
- produce weekly and monthly Schoolpod print outs of figures for BWM and Attendance Leaders
- update home contact log with all actions from home visits conducted by Attendance Team
- prepare and accurately record all student absence cases that result in legal action
- manage referral sheets and produce attendance printouts for school teams and Education Welfare Officer
- produce half termly attendance analysis data to inform staff and students of trends in attendance
- monitor and record all 'managed move' students
- monitor all student attendance records for alternative provision

Attendance Team

- work closely with BWM to establish daily home visits for poor or unexplained absence
- ensure calls home policy is consistent, attendance staff to call home for all students falling below 93%

- manage and co ordinate weekly Upper, Middle and Lower school meetings to discuss all students under 95%
- produce half termly data for all Heads of School and SLT
 - disproportionate PA students
 - attendance by year group and House
 - trend analysis on recorded absence
 - historical analysis on students achieving attendance milestones (85%, 90%, 95%,100%)
- implement intervention strategies to improve attendance amongst persistent absentees cohort
- regularly visit house groups to praise good attendance and highlight poor attendance
- compile half termly attendance reports for SLT
- co-ordinate and chair all EWO meetings on site, requesting intervention when required e.g. legal, home visits, panel meetings etc.
- co-ordinate and chair all family panel meetings with parents
- attendance lead to conduct student interviews with all pupils demonstrating persistent absence
- ensure correct procedures are followed for ‘off rolling’ students and keeping clear records of actions

Punctuality

School starts at 8.55a.m. Registration is for fifteen minutes and students are then sent to lesson 1. A hand bell will be rung 3 minutes before the official bell to allow students to enter building in readiness for registration and classes.

Students arriving after the start of lessons must sign in at Student Reception and take a late note to their lesson. The reason for lateness will be recorded on Schoolpod..

Students on the late list will be transferred to the register by the Attendance Team on a regular basis. Register close at 9.15am. Students arriving after that may be marked as absent.

Subject teachers, House Tutors and Guidance Leaders will follow procedures as outlined above.

Senior Staff will work with School Teams and House Tutors to improve punctuality first thing each day.

Senior staff will also operate a ‘Late Gate’ weekly and implement sanctions for persistent latecomers.

Sustained follow up for persistent latecomers will include home contact and use of sanctions.

Internal Truancy

All staff must manage corridors and actively direct students to class quickly. Students out of class should carry an explanatory note.

Most internal truancy is opportunistic. We will guard against it through random regular spot checks on lessons.

Attendance Team will scrutinise ALL lesson registers in real time and highlight any concerns, using class room checks to determine truancy.

Persistent offenders who have failed to respond to sanctions and support from subject and pastoral staff in school and their parents will be referred to EWO and a Support Meeting will be arranged involving the student, parent and key staff and external agencies.

Internal Truancy checks will only be effective if:-

- students do not know they are going to happen
- they are targeted at problem times and year groups
- they are followed up swiftly
- Returns should be completed within 10 minutes after start of lesson. Attendance team to chase up returns to ensure this happens. An electronic reminder can be sent to staff as a reminder.
- A record of students out of class will be kept and, where appropriate, detention slips sent to students via School Teams. At least 24 hours notice of detention (SLT) will be given.
- 2nd offence – parents to see Head of School.

Student out of class

Senior Staff and School Teams will endeavour to keep meetings with students out of lesson time. When absolutely necessary to do so a written request for a child will be sent. Students will always return with a signed note recording the time. Subject and Form Tutors who have to send students to other parts of the school will always send them with a signed note recording the time. Students who arrive without a note should be sent back to collect one. Selection of appropriate students should be made judiciously. The one who volunteers vigorously should not be sent.

Persistent Absenteeism

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our Attendance and School Teams. We combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All our PA students and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through an Early Help Assessment, peer mentor or Assistant Guidance Leader support, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer. Should improvements not be evident parents are liable for legal prosecution which may result in fixed penalty notices of up to £2000 or in extreme circumstances custodial sentences. The Academy will always endeavour to support parents and students in making the necessary improvements in a bid to prevent such action taking place.

Holidays in Term Time

All applications for leave must be made in advance and, at the discretion of the Academy, a maximum of 10 days in any academic year **may** be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

In ALL cases Academy will only authorise holiday absence in exceptional circumstances e.g. family weddings, bereavements etc

Leave in term will **not** be agreed by school:

- When a student is recently admitted to the school.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods, GCSE or any other public examinations.
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- When a student's attendance rate is already below (92%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Policy for Re-Integration of Long Term Absentees

House Tutors, School Teams and SEN staff along with the Home School Liaison Officer will work with EWO to ensure that students returning after a long absence are supported in their return to school.

Some students miss long periods of school for medical or emotional reasons and may feel especially vulnerable when they do eventually return. It is vital to make the transition back to full time schooling as smooth and untraumatic as possible. Ideally the return of the long term absentee needs to be carefully planned but this may not always be possible. To ease the return of the long term absentee schools may need to:

- nominate a key person to co-ordinate, monitor and review the child's return
- ensure that all staff are aware of and alert to the situation
- consider the possible need for a phased or gradual return
- consider the timetable and determine what is immediately possible and manageable for the child
- consider whether extra classroom support is appropriate
- ensure that any re-introductory programme/timetable is flexible
- consider the need to allocate another student as a 'peer mentor' to the returning student
- ensure that the child knows what is expected of him/her

THE SCHOOL WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH ANY STUDENT WHO IS ABSENT FOR LONG PERIODS (the child and his/her family still need to feel part of the school community throughout the period of absence).

ALWAYS MAKE THE STUDENT FEEL WELCOMED BACK (even if his/her past behaviour has been difficult).

NEVER MAKE SARCASTIC COMMENTS (a casual, 'Nice of you to turn up' or 'had a nice holiday?' can in a moment destroy hours of careful preparation).

NEVER LEAVE A STUDENT FEELING ABANDONED IN A CORRIDOR OR OUTSIDE AN OFFICE (there must always be someone to take responsibility for and know what to do with the child).

ALWAYS ENSURE THAT THE STUDENT HAS SOMEONE/SOMEWHERE TO GO IF THINGS GET DIFFICULT

Students returning after a long absence can not perform miracles - renewing or remaking friendships, catching up in the classroom, readjusting to a structured day - all take time and do not happen overnight. There may be hiccups. But throughout the process students must feel that **THE SCHOOL IS GLAD TO SEE THEM AND VALUES THEIR RETURN.**

Attendance Policy for Parents/Guardians

For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they should attend regularly and your son/daughter should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and progress. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Understanding types of absence:

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Medical evidence **MUST** be produced to guarantee authorisation.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absence not accompanied with medical evidence from a medical professional
- 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
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- If the school does not receive communication explaining absence, a member of the school Attendance Team may visit parents at home
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Manager and/or Pastoral Leaders, Assistant Principal if absences persist;

- Refer the matter to the Student Attendance and Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

Persistent Absenteeism

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral and attendance systems. We combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. All our PA students and their parents are subject to a home visit and Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an Assistant Guidance Leader, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer. Should improvements not be evident parents are liable for legal prosecution which may result in fixed penalty notices of up to £2000 or in extreme circumstances custodial sentences. The Academy will always endeavour to support parents and students in making the necessary improvements in a bid to prevent such action taking place

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to 'time off' in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and, at the discretion of the school, a maximum of 10 days in any academic year **may** be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

School will only permit term time leave under exceptional circumstances e.g. family weddings, bereavements etc.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a student is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods GCSE or any other public examinations.
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- When a student's attendance rate is already below (92%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Children Missing From Education

A child missing education from school due to an unexplained absence, or by leaving the school unexpectedly is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, or where a family may be in need of additional support. The Academy has drawn up this policy to deal with children who miss schooling in these circumstances, particularly on repeat occasions and for those children who leave school without clear indications of where they will be continuing their education.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Attendance Policy and in particular with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy of which it is an integral part. The policy has regard to the DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Statutory guidance for Schools and Colleges, April 2014 and the LSCB's guidance, Keeping records of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns, January 2014.

The school will carry out daily registration and absences will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy. This policy covers those instances where:

- There is a repeated pattern of absence
- The reason for absence is unclear or unexplained
- A member of staff has concerns about the nature of a pupil's absence

In these instances the Academy Attendance Team would investigate reasons and attempt to make contact with parents / guardians. If sufficiently concerned the Attendance team would inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and, if appropriate, a Child Protection Incident form is completed.

The School's DSL will then follow the procedure detailed in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

When a pupil leaves the Academy, the Attendance Team will make contact with the receiving school to ensure the child is registered at the new school and has started to attend. Only at this point is an 'off register' form completed and handed to the Academy Principal and designated Education Welfare Officer to sign and confirm the off registration.

If a Child Protection Incident form has been created, the DSL will then forward the appropriate records to the receiving school, in line with the LSCB's guidance: Keeping records of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns; January 2014.

When a pupil leaves our school without clear indication of a receiving school, the Academy will ensure they have:

- Enquired as to the whereabouts of the missing student with staff and pupils
- Contacted all emergency numbers
- Attendance Team have checked with neighbours and any other extended family

Once the above have been exhausted the Academy will contact the Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority and ensure the students details are placed on the 'Lost Pupils Database' to advise them of the missing student and to start their tracking procedures. In case of serious concern the DSL will contact the Duty and Assessment Team, in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, for further advice.