



St Nicholas Catholic High School

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

We aspire to embrace the Gospel and its values,
celebrating uniqueness and diversity.

Our learning, within an enterprise culture,
is based upon trust and respect which define
our relationships within the world family.

Everyone Matters

RATIONALE

All children should have the opportunity to benefit from their education. Non-attendance at school, even for short periods of time, can have a detrimental effect on children's future opportunities by limiting their educational experiences. St Nicholas Catholic High School recognises its role established in the mission statement, to ensure good patterns of attendance which will enable every child to fulfil their potential.

PURPOSES

1. To ensure that DfE regulations regarding attendance, absence and punctuality – and school interpretation of the same – are clear for students, parents/carers and staff.
2. To encourage maximum attendance at school so that students can capitalise on their entitlement.
3. To ensure that parents/carers understand the school's expectations in the case of unavoidable absences.
4. To promote an appropriate climate, in conjunction with the behaviour policy, this will encourage attendance of above 96%.
5. To minimise unavoidable absence.
6. To recognise the detrimental effect of absence on the progress and wellbeing of students.
7. To make clear to parents/carers that deciding whether an absence is authorised is the responsibility of the school.
8. To work in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to promote the safeguarding of young people in our community.
9. To ensure a whole school, escalating response to improving attendance for all students.

GUIDELINES

1. The school will only authorise unavoidable absence. It will act quickly, and liaise with home, in the case of unexplained absence.
2. The school will seek to promote a positive educational environment, with a curriculum, appropriately differentiated, to include the needs of each child.
3. The school will monitor patterns of absence and lateness and liaise with home in cases of concern. School will liaise with the Education Welfare Service or other partner agencies where appropriate.
4. The importance of attendance at school will be emphasised in the PSHCE programme, parents' evenings, the school planner, academic information sent home and be promoted around the school.
5. Attendance rates for forms will be reported weekly via the school newsletter. The school will monitor attendance to identify groups and individuals with irregular attendance. Appropriate action will be taken to improve attendance utilising the support of the Education Welfare Service where appropriate.

6. Students should only be absent if the reasons are unavoidable. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is against the law. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. The school may refer to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) at the Local Authority when dissatisfaction is felt with a student's attendance record or when parents are yet to engage with the school.
7. If planned absence from school is required, the request must be made **IN WRITING** at least 1 month before the proposed date of absence. Previous attendance of student may be considered when deciding whether to authorise the absence. School may seek further evidence to support such an application.
8. School will seek to support students' out of school commitments in relation to sporting, dramatic or work experience related activities by awarding an appropriate out of school learning code (please see DfE guidance on *School Attendance, November 2016*).
9. The Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher is authorised to refuse permission for any planned leave of absence in term-time in line with government and Cheshire West and Chester guidelines. **Leave of absence may only be granted in exceptional circumstances in line with Government regulations. Should a Parent/ Carer decide to take a holiday during term time they must apply in writing to the school explaining the exceptional circumstances for the leave of absence.** Parents / carers can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. The fixed penalty notice is £60 per parent per child if paid in 21 days and increases to £120 if paid within 28 days.
10. The school recognises the difficulties presented by the non-arrival of provided transport. In such circumstances, a flexible approach to lateness is adopted.
11. The school operates an electronic lesson registration system to minimise the potential of post-registration truancy.
12. The school recognises its legal duty to publish absence figures to parents, and to promote attendance. This is done via the tracking and monitoring information and the academic reports sent home via the student. Form attendance is also reported via the school newsletter.
13. The school is currently exploring ways of implementing a parental engagement strategy through which parents / carers can access live attendance data via the FROG platform. The school is liaising with parents /carers about this through the parental forum.
14. Good attendance will be recognised and rewarded via form time and assemblies.
15. Parents failing to notify the school of absence will have 10 school days from the absence to do so before it becomes unauthorised.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES – In line with the DfE guidance of January 2015, School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures.

1. Parents should ensure students are in school and prepared for learning by 08.45. Students arriving after this time will be recorded as late and a sanction given.
2. Students arriving after this time but before 09.15 must attend form where they will be marked as late and have a readiness for learning assessment by their form tutor and a sanction given.
3. Students arriving after 09.15 **MUST** sign in at reception then go to lesson after a readiness for lesson assessment by the on duty learning mentor. The reason will be recorded.
4. Parents /carers are expected to contact school on the first day of a child's absence by telephone (01606 706000), letter, or personal contact. Notification should be made by 8.55 am. When reporting an absence this must include the students' name, form, reason for absence and expected length of absence. If school has not received notification of absence of a student of statutory school age, the school will text the parents to notify that their son / daughter is not present and request the parent provides the reason for absence without delay. Where this may not be possible, a note or a purple slip from the students' planner may be completed retrospectively and given to the school office.
5. Parents / Carers must update the school **EVERY DAY** of absence unless agreed to length of absence with the attendance officer.
6. If a planned absence from school is required, the request must be made **IN WRITING** at least 1 month before the proposed date of absence.
7. Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs a child might have.
8. **Fixed Penalty Notice.** The LA, in conjunction with the school, may issue a Penalty Notice if a child has between 10 and 26 unauthorised sessions where the student's attendance is causing concern. The Penalty Notice is £60 per child for each parent. The fine is to be paid within 21 days for receipt of the notice. If there is a failure to pay the fine, the amount is doubled to £120 to be paid within 28 days of the initial notice. Non-payment of fines can lead to prosecution under the Education Act (1996).
9. **Prosecution.** The LA has a statutory responsibility to ensure that a parent of a child of compulsory school age has their child registered at a school and that the child attends regularly. If a parent fails to do this, the LA may bring prosecution under the Education Act (1996) As a parent, you are legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly and is punctual. If you fail to ensure this you are committing an offence under the Education Act (1996) which may lead to a fine of up to £2500 and/or a prison sentence. You may find yourself issued with a penalty notice.
10. Parents / Carers must work alongside school and any other agency to remove barriers to regular school attendance. This includes attending planning meetings with school staff and agreeing to measures to improve the attendance and/or punctuality of their children.
11. Parents may be requested to provide medical evidence of illness upon the 4th episode in order for

school to authorise. Examples of this may be copies of prescriptions or receipts for the purchase of over the counter medicines.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES RELATING TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

1. Implement rewards for students with high level of attendance and those improving attendance.
2. Ensure parents are aware of the negative impact of irregular attendance appropriate progress and well-being of children.
3. Contact Parents / Carers by 11.00am on a student's absence where no notification has been provided to ensure the child is safe.
4. Contact parents when students have a 2nd episode of absence to highlight the impact upon attendance or when length of absence has not been verified.
5. Contact parents via the school's attendance strategy based upon irregular attendance and alert parents via our staged letters (amber, red and blue)
6. Seek student voice (wishes and feelings) to ascertain any barriers to attendance. Especially where EBSN is becoming apparent.
7. Invite parents into school to discuss ways of improving attendance with Year Leader.
8. Invite parents to an attendance panel meeting (school) to agree an attendance contract with students and school. This will be over a period of 15 consecutive school days.
9. Initiate a TAF intervention for complex situations requiring the input from external agencies.
10. In conjunction with parents and the Cheshire West and Chester document '*I can't cope...*' to identify students who may be experiencing EBSN to identify a significant adult to work with a family and student.
11. Refer to Education Welfare Service when attendance continues to deteriorate.
12. Refer to Education Welfare Service where legal interventions such as fixed penalty notices (FPN) or further prosecution.

CONCLUSION

The school is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure the highest level of attendance as possible.

Reviewed by: Student Welfare & Progress Committee	Date:
Ratified by Governing Body	Signed: Date:
Review of Policy Due By	Date: