

St Benedict's Catholic College



Attendance policy

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Regular attendance at college is essential to promote the education of students. The college's ethos demonstrates that students feel their presence in college is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late and that appropriate action will be taken when necessary.

Rationale

St Benedict's Catholic College will provide opportunities for all its students to receive an education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his or her true potential.

The college will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the college community feels wanted and secure.

College staff will work with students and their families and in partnership with the Attendance Compliance Team (ACT) to ensure each student attends college regularly and punctually.

The college will reward excellent attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who routinely give attendance and punctuality a low priority.

The policy aims

- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the college including students, parents/carers and staff
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students
- To ensure a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance-related data
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and the college
- To provide a system of rewards for excellent and improved attendance
- To recognise the needs of individual students when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence
- To promote effective partnerships with the Attendance Compliance Team (ACT)
- To encourage parents and carers in taking responsibility for their child's attendance by working in partnership with the college to maintain high levels of attendance
- To monitor and support the wellbeing of students

School attendance and the law

- By law – all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude or any special educational needs they may have
- Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their child receives a suitable education (Education Act 1996). Failure to ensure that their child attends school punctually and regularly, may lead to legal action
- Local Education Authorities are required by law to enforce school attendance. They usually do so through the ACT which can use court proceedings to seek an Education Supervision Order or Attendance Order on the child
- Leave of absence may only be granted by the Principal. As from 1st September 2013, the Principal is prohibited from granting leave of absence to a student, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the student normally resides, and the Principal considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application
- The absence of a student without an established acceptable reason, or where no reason has been provided by the parent/carer should be recorded as unauthorised
- Students below 90% attendance are considered to be persistent absentees and parents risk being referred to the ACT for poor attendance



Policy implementation

The college will:

- Expect students to attend college regularly, on time, properly equipped and ready to learn
- Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality
- Relate attendance issues directly to the college's values, ethos and curriculum
- Communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality
- Emphasise to all that excellent attendance directly correlates with strong student academic and social progress
- Include attendance rates in all final reports and references
- Employ an Attendance Manager to be responsible for monitoring progress in attendance
- Employ Attendance Solutions Essex Ltd to assist with the monitoring and management of attendance issues
- Make every effort to contact the parents/carers of any student whose absence has not been established by previous contact via the 'Student Absence Line'

Students will:

- Ensure that they attend the college regularly and on time (9am start) and be punctual to all lessons and form time
- Ensure that they receive an attendance mark either via their register during registration or at Student Services/Reception
- Bring in the appropriate appointment letter or card regarding medical appointments during the college day, ensure they have an 'authorised absence pass' and report to Student Services/Reception when leaving and sign back into college on their return. This is vital in the event of an evacuation

Parents/carers will:

- Accept responsibility for ensuring their child attends regularly and punctually
- Make every effort to ensure that medical appointments are made outside of college hours. If this is not possible the appropriate appointment letter or card needs to be sent in giving leaving and return times
- Contact the college on the first day of their child's illness and each day after, as long as the absence continues. (Telephone the college before 9.00 am, on the 'student absence line' on 01206 516817)
- Contact the college following a period of absence and provide the attendance team with signed written confirmation of the reasons for the absence, even after a telephone call

Attendance Solutions Essex Ltd

Attendance Solutions are commissioned by the college to provide Education Welfare Services. The Education Welfare Officers meet weekly with the Attendance Manager and Assistant Principal who oversees attendance matters, to monitor and evaluate students' attendance. In addition to the rigorous analysis and evaluation of attendance data, they undertake meetings with students and parents/carers, home visits and register checks.



Requests for leave of absence

- Leave of absence may not be granted during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances
- There is no entitlement for students to go on holiday during term time. Unauthorised holidays taken during term time could result in the issue of a penalty notice. The college adheres to local authority guidance in this respect
- An application for leave must be made on the "Application for leave of absence during term time" form, detailing the exceptional circumstances and the Principal must be satisfied the circumstances warrant the granting of leave
- If parents do not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised
- If students are away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised

Essex County Council, ACT and penalty notices

For the current Essex County Council procedures and code of conduct see the following:

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Attending-School/Pages/Legal-action-to-enforce-penalties.aspx>