

CARDINAL WISEMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Cardinal Wiseman School students are growing to be.....



Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School is dedicated to promoting a distinctive Catholic ethos by upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church and promoting the Wiseman Virtues formed from the Gospel and rooted in the person of Christ. Our mission statement of ‘Omnia Pro Christo’ shapes our aims as a school and we are committed to developing the full potential of every individual, regardless of culture, race, religion, disability, or special need by creating a safe, orderly environment where all members of the community work diligently in a spirit of cooperation and treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times. By attending school and through the development of the Wiseman Virtues students will become formed as valued Children of God.

Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School places high priority on good attendance and punctuality, believing that it promotes effective learning and has a significant impact on personal development, progress and attainment, whilst at and beyond school. Regular attendance is crucial if students are to reach their potential and be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic success.

Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School will strive to provide a welcoming environment for all students and staff and will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends regularly and is punctual to school.

AIMS OF THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

*Through the aims of this policy students will become **generous** for the gift of school and **discerning** in their decisions to attend school regularly.*

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School.
- To prevent and improve persistent absence within the school.

- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to students and parents/carers.
- To develop a systematic approach to collating and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive communication between home and school.
- To maintain a system of rewards and sanctions.
- To promote effective partnerships with outside agencies.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES

Through the well-defined roles and responsibilities students will understand truthfully the importance of attendance and will be intentional in their actions to maintain or improve their attendance.

Parents' Responsibilities

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act states that: 'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence.' Parents (or the person with parental responsibility) are primarily responsible for ensuring that their child attends and stays at school. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at the school on time, correctly dressed and prepared to learn.

If a student is prevented from attending Cardinal Wiseman because of sickness or other unavoidable cause then it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the student's absence, ideally this should be by telephone on the first day of absence and confirmed in writing. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time.

Students' Responsibilities

Students are responsible for making sure that their attendance and punctuality is maintained at the highest level.

- They should attend school and all of their lessons on time, equipped and ready to learn.
- Following an absence, students must bring in a note explaining the reason for their absence.
- Students must follow the correct procedures when arriving late to the school.
- Any problems with attendance should be discussed with their Formation tutor, Pastoral Support Team, SENCO, Head of Year, Attendance Officer, External Attendance officer or the relevant Assistant Head.

Staff Responsibilities

All the staff at Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School will provide an ethos which places a high value on regular attendance and punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Class Teachers

- To take the register during all lessons using the assigned system. This must be completed on time and accurately every lesson. The register should be completed in silence, saying out loud students names, checking with a head count and in the first 10 minutes of the lesson.
- To use a paper registration sheet to communicate all absences when the electronic system is not available. This paper register should contain forenames and surnames.
- To ensure all students are aware that they must sign in at the Main Office if they arrive in school late.
- Keep the Attendance Officer, SLT attendance lead and Head of Year informed of any signs of suspected truancy using the 'attendance' email group.
- Inform the Attendance Officer and appropriate Head of Year of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences.
- To positively encourage all students to be aware of and engage with the reward systems related to excellent and improved attendance.

Heads of Year

- To encourage an ethos of excellent attendance with all students.
- To monitor the attendance of all students within the year group.
- To analyse patterns of non-attendance and intervene using effective and sustained strategies.
- To keep records of those interventions and review them with the Assistant Head responsible for attendance to become ever more effective.
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with.
- To monitor individual student's attendance through the Attendance Monitoring Programme in place.
- To support the Attendance Officer in obtaining reasons for absence in difficult cases by supplying letters/contacting parents directly.
- To meet with the Attendance Officer and Assistant Head responsible for attendance to discuss the attendance of students in their year group and specific issues relating to this.
- To identify students in need of further support and to use appropriate referral systems.
- To place attendance and punctuality on the agenda for Year Group meetings.
- To seek the support of the Assistant Head teacher responsible for attendance as required.

Attendance Data Lead

- Responsibility for producing attendance data and reports as required by the SLT link.
- To provide the Assistant Head responsible for attendance with weekly totals for attendance in a format that builds cumulative data fit for Governors and Ofsted.

- Monitoring register completion, especially the AM and PM marks and chasing discrepancies.
- To ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Daily administration of absences - this includes sending absence text messages.
- To ensure all 'paper' registers are transferred to the electronic system after registration when necessary.
- To print off registers (am and pm) in case of emergency evacuation.
- To provide compulsory attendance data termly to the DfE.
- To liaise with external education providers and ensure regular attendance feedback is given to the school and the LA for students receiving off site provision.

Attendance Officer

- To make contact with home following a pupil absence.
- To operate the electronic attendance software on a daily basis.
- Contact parents/carers where there is unexplained absence.
- Pass on relevant information to the Assistant Head responsible for attendance regarding unusual or long term absences.
- To provide Head of Years with weekly updates of attendance to allow them to clear unauthorised absences.
- To operate the absence line and transfer information on to the attendance system.
- Amend registers accordingly.
- Monitor and review student attendance looking for patterns and trends with regard to absences.
- Monitor and review student punctuality.
- Generate letters of concern when attendance hits key percentage figures.
- Seek support from the Head of Year or Assistant Head where there are concerns about student attendance/punctuality.
- To meet weekly with the Assistant Head to identify individual students whose attendance is a concern and suggest appropriate actions.
- To carry out pupil interviews exploring the issues around the pupils' attendance and explain to them the importance of attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers of students whose attendance is a concern.
- To arrange home visits as a strategic way to communicate with parents/carers of students whose attendance is a concern.
- To maintain a system of rewards and sanctions for attendance including attendance certificates, praise postcards, extended break times for 100%, parental meetings, 'late gate', home visits and the 'Fast Track'.
- To carry out the legal action on the 'Fast Track' with the poorest attenders in the school.
- To liaise closely with the DSL team to identify any child protection issues that are or may impact attendance and plan actions to prevent this.

Assistant Head teacher responsible for Attendance.

- To monitor attendance across Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School on a regular basis.

- To set and review challenging targets for attendance and support all staff and students to achieve them.
- To monitor and provide feedback on the work of Heads of Year and Chaplains to support ever more effective interventions in formative dialogue and in the performance management cycle.
- To ensure good attendance by holding to account the work of the Attendance Officer and the Attendance Data Lead through direct line management.
- To ensure electronic mechanisms for gathering attendance data (SIMS) are working effectively and staff are trained and supported in using them.
- To liaise with the Attendance Officer and ensure that attendance data is updated regularly and feedback is provided to students, parents, staff, governors and DfE on a regular basis.
- To lead the rewards policy for excellent and improved attendance.
- To ensure strategies to encourage high attendance receive a high profile with students, parents, staff and governors.
- To ensure strategies to address lateness work effectively.
- To ensure the legal process of 'Fast Track' is used effectively and the processes are followed accurately ensuring good outcomes.
- To liaise closely with the DSL team to identify any child protection issues that are or may impact attendance and plan actions to prevent this.
- To provide reports to the Head teacher on actual attendance and strategy.

Head Teacher

- To delegate appropriate actions below to the Assistant Head responsible for attendance where appropriate.
- Set attendance targets and monitor progress.
- Determine (in collaboration with relevant senior staff) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested.
- Notify parents/carers as appropriate that if a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents/carers commit an offence.
- Liaise with the appropriate bodies over persistent absences.
- Liaise with agencies and the police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school.
- To provide reports to the governing body on actual attendance and strategy.

Governing Body

- Approve the policy and any proposed changes.
- To be aware of the targets for attendance and current progress towards those targets.
- To hold the school to account by providing challenges to its work and data on attendance.
- To be aware of strategies designed to encourage excellent and improved attendance and punctuality.

- To monitor the effectiveness of strategies used to monitor attendance and ensure appropriate requirements are funded and supported through termly meetings by the link governor.
- To intervene in cases of severe poor attendance and punctuality and to offer support to ensure improvement.
- In addition, schools are required to produce written home-school agreements which include clear understanding about attendance and punctuality.

PROCEDURES

*Through clear procedures we will foster a community where students have **faith** in themselves and are **hopeful** for good attendance.*

Regular and punctual attendance of students at the School is expected and is strictly enforced. It is both a legal requirement and essential in order for students to maximise their learning.

Registration

All students are required to attend Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School Monday-Friday from 8.30am (for years 9, 10 and 11) and 8:40am (for years 7 and 8) to 3.15pm

In order to record attendance, students are registered at each lesson using an electronic registration system.

All teachers must take a register within each lesson (preferably at the start) during the school day.

Lateness

Any student arriving after 8.30am or 8.40am will be classified as being late to school. Their names will be taken by the Attendance Officer, and they must attend a break-time detention. Failure to attend will result in a lunchtime detention and failure to attend that an after-school detention.

The parents of persistently late pupils will be required to attend school for a parental meeting with the SLT attendance lead. Any pupil who arrives at school after the gate has been shut must sign in at the Main Office giving a reason for their absence. They will be recorded as late and marked as such in the registers. Arrival at school after 9.30am with no valid reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

A text message will be sent to parents/carers to inform them of their child's lateness.

Absence

In cases of illness, the school should be notified by telephone as soon as possible and the student must bring a written explanation of their absence to the Main Office on their return.

All lessons are to be checked during Periods 1, 2 or 3 to identify students who are absent and a list sent to 'mentors'.

If the school has not received notification of absence a text message will be sent to the parent/carer confirming that the student is absent and asking for an explanation. The register will be updated once parents / carers make contact.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absences

It is the duty of the school to decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. An explanation does not itself authorise an absence, only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered authorises it.

Persistent Absence

If a student has an attendance figure of 90% or less, by law, they are classified as being persistently absent from school. This is a key measure for the school and will demonstrate the effectiveness of the schools work on attendance. The school will aim to prevent students from being classified as persistently absent through the work of this policy. When a student does become classified as persistently absent the school will utilise, unless under extreme circumstances, the legal process of the Fasttrack campaign as a serious sanction and as a means to improve attendance.

Reasons for Absence

Illness

If a student is absent as a result of illness the absence is authorised. This needs to be confirmed by a parent/carer in writing. If a child is regularly ill or ill for an extended period of time the school may request medical evidence. This is to ensure that students who are missing school due to ill health are seeking the correct medical care and we are helping to keep our students safe.

Medical and Dental Appointments

As far as possible, appointments should be made out of school hours. If a medical or dental appointment has to be made during the school day, the school must be informed by letter beforehand stating the time of the appointment in order that the absence can be authorised.

All students must sign out at the Main Office before they leave the school to attend the appointment and sign in again when they return. Students who have not brought in a letter of notice of the appointment from their parents/carers may not be allowed to leave school. If there is any doubt about the authenticity of the letter, parents/carers will be contacted.

Family bereavements

The school recognises that the death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event and the school has the discretion to authorise such absences.

Days of religious observance

Absence due to participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong is authorised by the school.

Minding the house/Looking after siblings/Looking after parents.

In the vast majority of cases, such absences will constitute unauthorised absence.

Shopping during school hours

It is highly unlikely that such absence can ever be justified and is therefore unauthorised.

Special occasions/circumstances

It is the responsibility of the school to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not. Each application would be considered separately. Absences for social occasions such as birthdays and family outings are unauthorised by the School.

Family holidays

Family holidays during term time **WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED** unless permission is granted. Parents wishing to take their child out of school during term time are required to apply in advance. **The advice of the government following COVID-19 is that all such requests for absence are unauthorised.**

When considering whether to grant a term-time leave in normal circumstances, the school will review:

- The circumstances involved
- The time and length of the proposed leave
- The student's attendance record
- Any previous requests for leave of absence
- If it is close to examinations or tests

If permission is not granted and parents/carers take their child out of school, the absences will be recorded as unauthorised and the parent/carer will receive a Penalty Notice.

Strategies for Maintaining and Improving Attendance

- Attendance and punctuality are always discussed at weekly meetings between the Assistant Head responsible for attendance and the Attendance Officer.
- Letters of concern will be sent home when attendance hits key percentages.
- Home visits and 'Safe and Well' checks are conducted.
- Year group attendance and individual concerns highlighted at pastoral meetings and strategies discussed concerning levels of intervention.
- 'Fast Track' is run in school to improve poor attendance.
- Parents/carers are identified and spoken to at Progress Evenings throughout the year wherever there is a concern.
- Parents of those causing concern will be invited into 'Panel Meetings' with Pastoral staff to ascertain issues, clarify expectations and support better attendance through individual attendance plans.
- Magic Breakfast club is set up to encourage pupils to attend before school starts.

Strategies for Rewarding Good Attendance

- Certificates and praise cards are used to reward students who have consistently high attendance or who have improved throughout the half term/term/year.
- Rewards each term/year for students who have consistently high or improved attendance.
- Extended break time for 100% attenders.
- Pupils are rewarded regarding attendance at Pastoral Awards Assemblies and the main Awards Evening event at the end of the academic year.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING

*Through the process of monitoring and review we will foster a community that is **attentive** to and **discerning** of the importance of attendance*

The Attendance Data Lead will print off attendance reports for each Tutor group and Year groups on a half-termly basis to enable regular updating, monitoring and evaluating.

The Assistant Head and Attendance Officer will analyse weekly data to implement appropriate actions for students whose attendance is a concern.

Regular monitoring enables the school to:

- Target individuals for action and support and set realistic targets.
- Actively involve parents in increasing attendance levels.
- Provide data on student's attendance via the reporting system and more regularly when required.
- Identify groups for targeted support.
- Inform future strategy and practice.
- Set targets at individual, Year Group and school level.

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School