



Saint Benedict
A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Date of Policy	July 2024
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Date approved by Headteacher	July 2024
Review date	July 2025

Attendance Policy

This policy was developed through consultation with the Head teacher, Senior member of staff responsible for Attendance, Academy Attendance Officer and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). It will be reviewed annually by the Governors' monitoring committee.

Mission Statement for Attendance

We are committed to ensuring that all families and pupils understand the importance of 100% attendance.

Attendance in school is vital for academic success. Research shows that pupils whose attendance is less than 95% are at risk of failing to achieve 5 GCSEs at grade 4 and above.

For these reasons, we monitor attendance patterns with vigilance and hold parents and carers to account where necessary.

We expect all pupils to attend at all times.

- Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole Academy community; including parents and carers.
- Good attendance is crucial to maximising pupils' potential, progress and achievement.
- Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life.
- Academy staff will work in partnership with parents and other professionals to improve attendance, to identify vulnerable pupils and to meet the needs of those whose attendance is poor.
- Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and explicitly recognised as such by school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all and promotes inclusion for all pupils.

Practice

- Pupils must arrive in school by 8:35am; tutor time begins at 8:40am.
- Pupils arriving in school after 9am before the registers close at **09.20** will be marked as **late**.
- Pupils arriving late to school after the register has closed at **09.20** and the school is not satisfied with the reason given will be recorded as **unauthorised absence**.
- Pupils who are persistently late to school will be investigated, parents will be contacted for an explanation and will be advised that continued lateness after the register closes may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.
- Pupils who are late to school if they have been delayed by the school bus will not be marked late.
- Pupils late owing to medical appointments must provide a letter showing proof of appointment.
- Parents and/or carers are expected to notify school of a pupil absence.
- The school must be notified of the reason for a child's absence in order to safeguard the child and protect their educational well-being.
- In the case of illness, parents and/or carers should phone the school on the first day of absence and every day of absence thereafter.
- The school will contact parents and/or carers on a daily basis if they fail to inform the school of an absence.
- The school will continue to phone home for a period of extended absence, even if the reason for absence is known.
- Family holidays and non-hospital medical appointments, dentist and optician appointments are not permitted during term time. Pupils have 13 weeks' school holiday per year and further time off on INSET days and so we kindly ask parents and/or carers to use these times to make routine appointments in order to avoid unnecessary absences from school. In accordance with Government and LA guidelines **set out in Regulation II of School Attendance (Pupil Registration) of School Regulations 2024** the school will not authorise any absence for holidays
- Pupil's absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised' if we are not satisfied with the reasons for absence. Continued unauthorised absences may result in a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority.
- For a day set aside *exclusively* for religious observance, pupils will be granted one day of authorised absence per religious festival. Time taken beyond this will not be authorised.
- The school takes its duty to safeguard the welfare of all its pupils. Unexplained absences and a lack of contact from parents may cause us concern and lead us to involve other agencies such as Children's Services. We will contact Children's Services within 2 days for any child with a Child Protection Plan.
- The school carefully monitors attendance on a daily basis and attendance is discussed weekly by the school's Pastoral Leaders.
- Parental meetings are held to challenge and support our parents in raising the attendance of any child the school has concerns about.
- Where a child is failing to attend school, a plan will be drawn up in consultation with the family and, possibly, external agencies, including Education and Social Welfare workers.
- Pupils who are off school for a long period due to severe illness will be issued with optional work to carry out at home to avoid falling behind.

Absence Procedures

In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils, we have a rigorous monitoring system and follow up policy when absences from school occur. They are as follows:

1. On the first day of absence, and every day thereafter the school must be notified of the pupil absence and reason.
2. When a pupil's attendance **falls below 97% - Stage 1**, the Pastoral Team will contact parents/Carers,
3. If attendance **falls below 93% - Stage 2**, the Head of Year will formally contact parents by telephone and follow up letter.
4. If attendance is still not improved and **falls below 90% - Stage 3**, the Head of Year will notify parents/carers that they have been referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.
5. Parents will be invited to a formal meeting with the Educational Welfare Officer and Head of Year, parents will be issued with a **Fast Track contract Stage 4**. This is a formal period of 4 weeks in which attendance must be 100% and an agreed period of time thereafter where attendance must be no less than 97%.
6. Further declines in attendance will result in formal hearings with the Deputy Head teacher responsible for attendance and the school's nominated link Governor.
7. Failure to comply with Fast Track will trigger **Stage 5 and will result in a Penalty Notice request being issued to the Local Education Authority.**

Home Visits

It is a normal and regular part of our communication with all families and pupils and part of our safeguarding duty to make home visits. These may be pre-arranged or, unannounced.

Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices are served to parents where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends school or is persistently late to school after the registers have closed.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be as follows,

- **1st Penalty Notice - £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.**
- **2nd Penalty Notice - In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.**
- **If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.**

Parent Information – Late Arrival to School

Expectation

Pupils will arrive in school on time and be present in Tutor time at 08.40am every day that school is open.

Late Arrival to School

Pupils arriving late to school **must** sign in at the Main reception Elmwood on Duffield Road.

Pupils arriving late to school **before** the register has closed at **09.20** will be recorded as **late** (L- code).

Pupils arriving late to school **after** the register has closed at **09.20**, and the school is not satisfied with the reason given, will be recorded as **unauthorised absence** (U - code)

Pupils who are late to school if they have been delayed by the school bus will not be marked late.

Pupils late owing to medical appointments **must** provide a letter showing proof of appointment.

All late arrivals to School will be monitored.

Pupils who are persistently late to school will be investigated, parents/carers will be contacted for an explanation and will be advised that continued lateness after the register has closes is an **unauthorised absence** and may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be as follows,

- **1st Penalty Notice - £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.**
- **2nd Penalty Notice - In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.**
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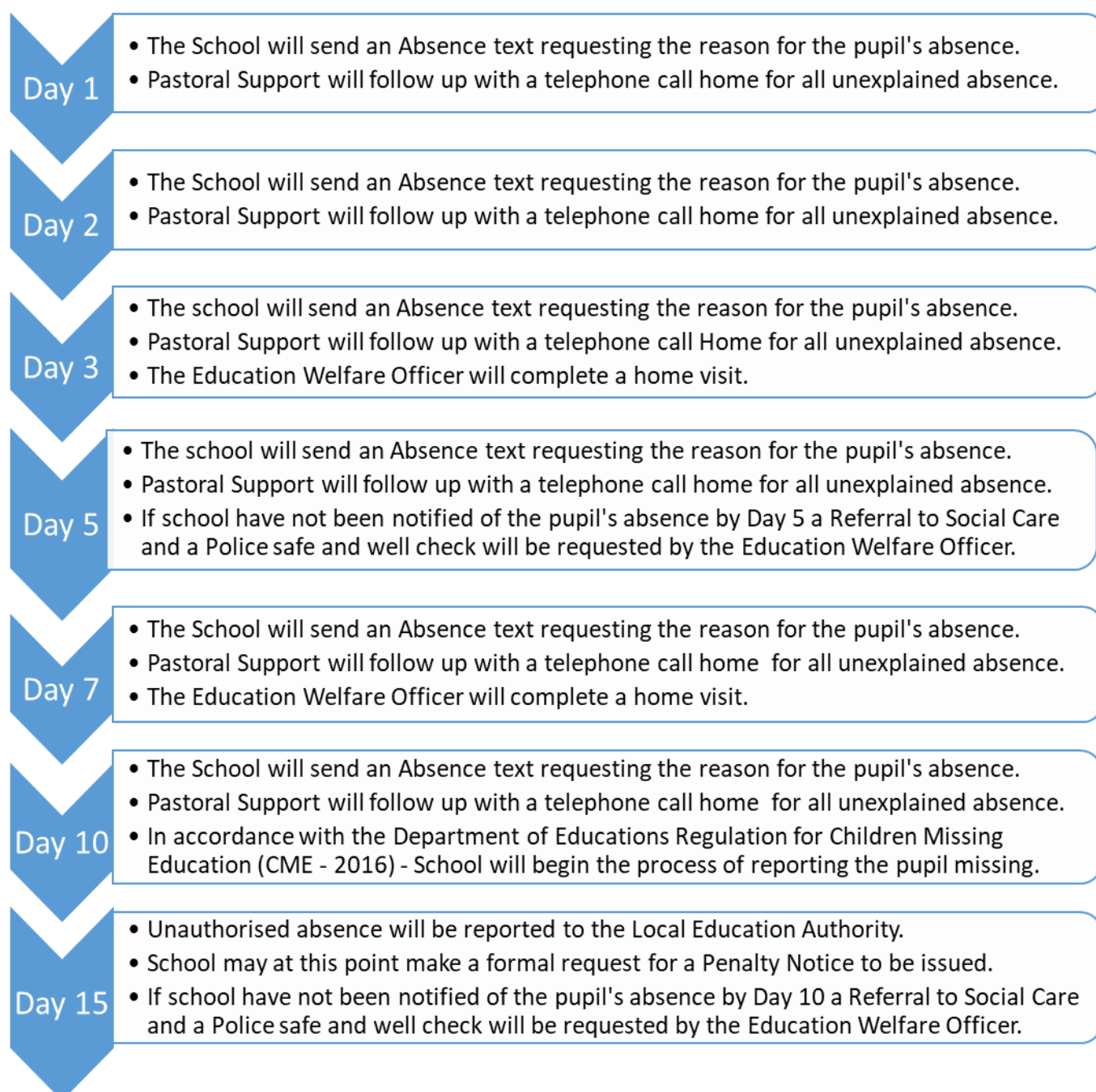
Parent Information - Absence

It is the parent/guardian/carers Legal responsibility to notify school of a pupil's absence on the first day of absence, and every day thereafter.

All absences must be reported on 01332 557032 option 1 before 9am.

State the pupil's name, year group, reason for absence and your relationship to the pupil.

If a parent fails to notify school the following process will be implemented immediately.



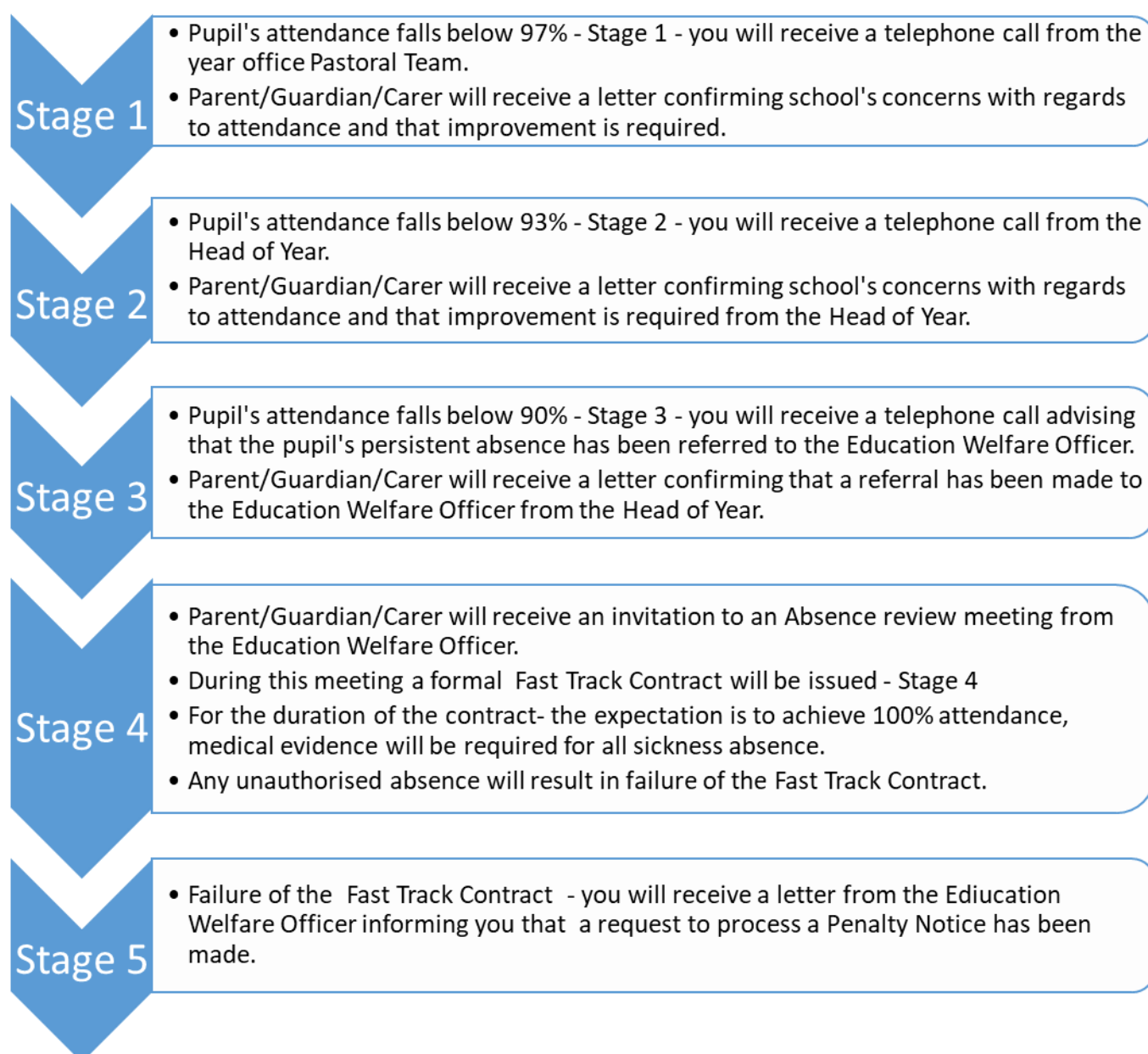
Parent - Attendance Process

Expectations

Pupils will attend school and lessons on time and every day that the school is open.

Pupils to achieve 100% attendance.

Pupil Attendance will be monitored from the Start of the Academic Year



Penalty Notice update – August 2024 – Parent information

Every moment in school counts and days missed add up quickly. Evidence shows that pupils who have good attendance enjoy better wellbeing and school performance than those who don't.

There are only a few circumstances where a child is allowed to miss school, such as illness or where the school has given permission because of an exceptional circumstance.

However, if your child misses school without a good reason, local councils and schools can intervene and you may be issued a fine.

The Department for Education have introduced a new national framework which will mean all local authorities have the same rules in place for when they need to consider a fine. More details regarding these are below.

It's important to acknowledge that children with long-term medical or more serious mental health conditions, and those with special educational needs and disabilities may face additional barriers.

For children who face complex barriers to attendance, schools should continue to have sensitive conversations with children and families and work with them to put support in place for their individual needs.

How much could I be fined if my child misses school?

In the majority of cases, schools and the local authority will try to provide support to help you improve your child's attendance first, but if this isn't effective or the absence is for unauthorised term time holiday, parents may face paying a fine.

Currently, it's the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents, meaning the process varies from council to council.

However, under the new national framework, all schools will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.**

This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.

In the case of repeated fines, **if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.**

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

How can you be sure parent fines are fair?

Fines are a last resort, and parents will be offered support to help improve their child's attendance first. The vast majority of fines for unauthorised absence (89%) are issued for term time holidays.

What if my child needs to miss school?

Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet.
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school.

What happens if my child misses school without a good reason?

If your child is absent and you haven't received advance permission from the headteacher to take your child out of school, the school and local council may take action.

Before that, your child's school and your local council are expected to support you to improve the child's attendance before any measures are put in place.

These measures can include:

- **Issue a penalty notice, otherwise known as a 'fine'** – your local council can give each parent a fine. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.
- **Seek an Education Supervision Order from the family court** – if the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help you get your child into education. The local council can do this instead of, or as well as, prosecuting you.
- **Prosecute you** – this means you have to go to court. You could get a fine, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order.