

The Newman Catholic Collegiate



“Growing Together for life”

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Policy Adopted	Next Review	Author
October 2021	September 2022	I Beardmore

Agreed by Governors	Date

Policy Statement

"By faith only do we know our position in the world, our circumstances, our rights and privileges, our fortunes, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our age, our mortality" John Henry Newman

In accordance with our Collegiate Mission statement, we strive to secure a shared vision for all associated with our Collegiate community and we aim to provide a caring environment which seeks to promote the development of self-respect and respect for others.

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential if children are to make good progress at school and maximise their full spiritual, academic and social potential in a caring and supportive environment. Staff, governors and Directors are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that it is effectively and appropriately implemented.

The academies aim to achieve good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which staff, students, parents/carers and when appropriate, the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The academies maintain attendance records and initiate quick and early intervention when a problem is identified. We feel it is crucial that children develop the habit of regular and punctual attendance and learn to be responsible and reliable. Staff encourage good attendance and punctuality and liaise with parents/carers and other agencies when appropriate. In addition, good attendance and punctuality are seen as achievements in their own right and are recognised as such by the academies. WE believe that that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards Collegiate life. This policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

This policy applies to all students including Nursery and Reception children across the Collegiate.

Parental responsibility

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of those with parental responsibility for children of school age, are required to ensure that their children are in receipt of full-time education. Children are required to attend and stay in school.

'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend school regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.'

The responsibility also extends to ensuring that the children attend school regularly, punctually, suitably dressed and in a fit condition to learn.

Completion of registers

Registers are completed at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions. At the Academies, the register will close 30 minutes after the start of the school day when a 'U' mark will be given to late pupils which indicates the pupil is on site but counts as an absent mark. Marks are recorded in line with the DfE codes.

Where manual registers are used, these are returned to the main office immediately following registration, or alternatively the electronic register is completed. If there are absences, administrative staff will ascertain the reason for the absence and the correct code will be marked in the register.

Procedures for reporting absence

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the academy of a student absence and also to inform of any changes to contact details.

On the first day of absence, parents/carers should inform the academy before 9am by one of the following ways:

- By telephone. During out of office hours a message may be left via the academy answering service
- By letter, delivered to the academy office
- By email to the academy email address
- In person at the academy office
- By showing an appointment card or letter in advance of the appointment
- By filling in a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances form in advance

When a student's absence has not been reported, the academy will contact parents/carers on the first day of absence by telephone and/or school comms with the intention of promoting partnership with parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality. The outcome of the conversation is recorded. If there is no reply, the relevant staff are informed and will follow up any unexplained absences which are a cause for concern. The Collegiate Education Welfare Officer may also be informed and a home visit carried out.

Authorised absence

The Principal and attendance leads have the ultimate responsibility for authorising absence and will do so when a valid reason is given for a student's absence. A student's absence from the academy will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received. The academies reserve the right to ask to see some form of medical evidence before deciding to authorise the absence, or not.

Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence will be given when a student does not attend the academy and no explanation or valid reason is given for their absence, or, if the Principal refuses to authorise an application of leave in exceptional circumstances. If attendance deteriorates, the academy may consider not authorising any further illness unless medical evidence is provided which covers the period of absence.

Medical Appointments

The academy discourages medical/dental appointments during academy hours. If this is essential, then a parent/carer must provide the appointment card or written note of explanation for the academy records where possible before they attend the appointment, or on return to the academy. Wherever possible, students are expected to attend the academy before and after the appointment. A signing in/out form is kept in the office to record such appointments.

If students are removed from the academy for whatever reason, without the permission of the Principal or Vice Principal, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Bereavement

The Collegiate is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals. The Principal will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

Religious Observance

Attendance at a religious observance set apart by the religious body will normally be granted authorised absence. The Principal should be consulted in advance. A maximum of two days during any academic year will be granted for religious observance.

Family Holidays during term time

Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to withdraw students from the academy for a holiday and, in law, are obliged to ask permission in advance by completing a 'leave in exceptional circumstances form' which can be obtained from the academy office.

An amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removed reference to family holidays to make it clear that Headteachers/Principals may NOT grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This amendment came into effect on 1 September 2013. The definition of exceptional circumstances is left to the discretion of the Principal. Parents/carers will be notified of the decision by letter and may be required to attend a meeting in school to discuss their request.

Reasons for exceptional circumstances DO NOT include annual holidays, cheaper during term time etc. Holidays/time off taken without the Principal's approval will be unauthorised and may be referred to the Collegiate Education Welfare Officer. Work will not be provided for the students during unauthorised holidays. It is the family's decision to remove a child from the academy for that period of time.

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance and punctuality are reviewed daily by the administrators and senior staff and on a regular basis by the Collegiate Education Welfare Officer. This ensures that attendance problems are noticed at the earliest opportunity and support and intervention can be implemented as soon as possible.

Where a student's attendance becomes a concern (falls below primary and secondary target of 96%), the academy will implement their monitoring system.

- Parents/carers will be informed about any attendance concerns via telephone calls, school communications, letters, meetings in the academy, home visits, open evenings and reports
- At the end of each term, colour coded letters are sent out and monitoring attendance letters are sent as appropriate
- Where attendance levels are below target, the academy will implement the monitoring attendance letters. Attendance is then monitored and further support/action implemented as appropriate
- If a student's absence is persistent, and becomes a concern, a letter will be sent home advising that no further absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is provided. This can be in the form of a GP letter, medical appointment card or the label from any prescribed medication in the pupil's name, covering the period of absence.
- At any point, the Collegiate Education Welfare Officer may become involved and carry out home visits, attendance clinics, late gates and offer support and advice around attendance and punctuality concerns.
- If there is no improvement, a statutory penalty notice warning letter may be issued and a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority will be made and the statutory intervention process would be implemented. If there is further unauthorised absence during the warning period, this could lead to a penalty notice fine, or prosecution in the Magistrates Court for non-school attendance.

Where attendance has remained poor during an academic year and is at the 'persistence absence' level, an end of year monitoring letter may be issued by the academy to parent/carers advising that at the start of a new academic year no absences will be authorised without some form of medical evidence.

If a term time leave of absence over five school days is not agreed and it is recorded as unauthorised absence in the register, this will automatically be referred to the Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority which could result in:

- a Penalty Notice (fine) Payment of Penalty Notices within 21 days is £60 per parent/carers, per child, and payment after this time, but within 28 days is £120 per parent/carers, per child.
- Non-payment of the Penalty Notice may result in legal action for non-school attendance which could result in prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act, where, if convicted a parent/carers may be fined up to £1000.

If two or more leave of absences under five days are taken during the academic year which add up to over five days, this will automatically be referred Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority which could result in the fines as above.

If a penalty notice fine has not been issued for a leave of absence under five days and there is other unauthorised absence recorded, a referral could be made to the Education Welfare Service at the Local Authority which could result in a Penalty Notice Warning being issued. During a warning period, attendance is monitored for a period of 20 days and if there is unauthorised absence during this time, it may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. Payment of Penalty Notices is the same as above.

The maximum number of Penalty Notices/fines which the Local Authority will issue in respect of an individual child in a twelve-month period is two. The Local Authority will then consider presenting the case at the Magistrates Court were prosecution may be considered.

If a student fails to attend the academy and their whereabouts are unknown, or, does not return to school on the date expected following a leave of absence the academy will implement the Local Authority's 'Children Missing Education' process on day six of non-attendance. On the twenty first day of non-attendance, the academy has the right to remove the student from the academy roll. The student will need to re-apply for a place. This may not be guaranteed due to other students who may be on the waiting list and the academy being oversubscribed.

Acknowledging Good Attendance

The Collegiate Academies constantly acknowledge students who are regularly punctual and have good attendance.

Students who achieve very positive attendance without absence will receive recognition. All of the collegiate academies will make their own arrangements to reward and recognise students with exemplary and outstanding attendance.

Punctuality

The Principal/ Vice Principal/SLT/ Head of Year monitors student's punctuality on a daily basis.

A recording system for monitoring late arrival is adopted by all academies.

- L mark is used if a student arrives after the start of the day
- U mark is used if student arrives after the close of registration

The late letter monitoring system will be implemented if the reasons for persistent lateness is deemed unsatisfactory. The Collegiate Education Welfare Officer will carry out unannounced 'late gate' monitoring and will challenge persistent late arrival to the academy.

This is reviewed regularly and individual sanctions are applied. At St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy a student who is late to the academy will be given a 30 minute detention that same afternoon.

This policy has been produced following consultation by students, parents/carers, staff and governors.

This policy was agreed by the Directors on:

This policy review will be required by the Directors by: 30th September 2022

Signed

Chair of Directors