



Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

Date of policy: November 2023

Next Review: November 2025



Mission Statement

At Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School, we pride ourselves on being a culturally diverse family. We seek to instill, in every child that we nurture, the joy and wonder of learning.

As we journey together with Christ, we develop children's resilience, intellectual curiosity and creativity through our positive learning behaviours. We nurture and cherish the unique talents of all, empowering them to flourish and grow into life-long learners.

Our mission is to show love, promote learning and belief in God our Father.

LOVE – LEARN- BELIEVE

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Rationale

Regular attendance along with punctuality is very important. Without it, the best efforts of teachers and school will come to nothing. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational disadvantages and social difficulties. Under Section 35 of the education Act 1944, a parent, an adult who has parental responsibility or an adult who has care of children of compulsory school age is required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education. Parents are responsible for supporting attendance and taking seriously any problems that may lead to non-attendance.



Aims

- To demonstrate to pupils, parents and staff that the school values good attendance.
- To raise the educational achievement of all pupils in the school.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.
- To promote regular school attendance at whole school level, class level and individual child level.
- To be consistent in the implementation of rewards and sanctions to promote good attendance.

DfE guidance attendance expectations

From the start of each term pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil.
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence.
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

DfE rules relating to Covid in schools

Routine testing for [Covid-19](#) ended in April 2022 and UK Health and Security Agency (UKHSA) [guidance](#) says that it is not recommended that children and young people are tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional. COVID-19 presents a low risk to children and young people and this, combined with high vaccination rates in the population indicates there are no longer specific rules relating to it in schools.

As such, school, in collaboration with Barnet local authority rigorously monitor attendance and punctuality in line with these expectations.

Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Report to parents/carers annually on how their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance be of concern
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Promote positive reinforcement through posters emphasising the school attendance motto "Every Day Matters!"
- Reward good or improving attendance and punctuality through the newsletter, certificates and class rewards.

Absence Procedures

It is the parent's/carers' responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. Parental contact on the first day of absence is essential to ensure safeguarding.



If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9:00am.
- Or they can call into school in person and report to reception.

If an absence is unexplained the school will text/call parents for an explanation. Absences will then be coded accordingly on Integris.

If your child is absent we will

- Text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you as part of our first response procedure, this will be followed up by a phone call;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Attendance Officer if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90% and if the Attendance Officer feels that intervention is needed.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, bereavement, interview at another school, medical/dental appointments (although we strongly encourage you to make these outside of school times) emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not receive a reason or an explanation considered reasonable. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- working, oversleeping
- Looking after brothers and sisters at home
- Non-urgent medical or dental appointments

When explanations for absence are not satisfactory, or when absence persists, parents should be invited into school to discuss any difficulties that may prevent their child(ren) from attending.

Please note that the decision to authorise absences rests with schools and not parents.

School refusers



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Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with irregular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. The Attendance Officer can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling (90%) across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. The Attendance Officer will monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly.

Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

End of the School Day

Children should always be clear about who is collecting them from school. Parents are asked to telephone the school if they are going to be late collecting their child so that the child doesn't become anxious. Pick up arrangements should be indicated on completed form and given to class teacher at the start of the school year. If arrangements change for your child, please complete an updated form at the school office.

Children not collected on time return to class with the teacher. Parents must then check in at the school office. Once their parent or carer checks in, the children will then be brought to the school office. On collection a valid reason must be given for the late collection and the child/ren must be signed out. If your child is not collected at the end of the day, and you have not contacted the school to advise us, the office will endeavour to contact you at home and at work. If this is unsuccessful, a call will be made to the emergency contact given by the parents. If it is still not possible to make contact then the Police and Social Services will need to be contacted.

Independent Travellers

If children are independent travellers parents should complete an independent travelers form and keep the school updated of any changes. Pupils, who are independent travellers, are prioritised in the first response procedure. Any changes to normal pick up arrangements should be made in advance. Please only call the school of changes of pick up arrangements in an emergency.

Parents of Independent Travellers (travelling without an adult), whose children are not attending school (due to illness for example) must contact the school by 9.00am with the reason. Failure to do so will result in the school contacting parents/carers at home or work to ask where the child is. If it is not possible to contact parents/carers the matter will be referred to the local Police. This is to ensure the safety of the child.

Exceptional Leave of Absence



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Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teacher's discretion.

(School Attendance, Statutory guidance and departmental advice, August 2013)

Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School does not approve family holidays to be taken during term time in accordance with the law. Parents wishing to take children out of school during term time must complete an exceptional leave of absence form and will need to make an appointment to meet the Head teacher to discuss the leave requested. When making a decision on whether a pupil may have leave during term time the Head teacher will consider the child's attendance record, attainment and ability to catch up on missed schooling and the frequency of request for leave made in the past.

Lateness

Children arriving late in the classroom disrupt both their own and the learning of others. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The school day at Blessed Dominic is split into two sessions, morning and afternoon with a registration period at the beginning of each.

Lateness is classed as any child coming into school 10 mins after their start time. The school gates are locked promptly at 8.55 and all children arriving after must report to the main school office so they can sign the late book with a reason for the lateness. Children arriving after morning registration will receive a late absence mark. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Pastoral Lead to discuss the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

Parents of any child who arrives late on more than 6 occasions in any 4 week period will be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for poor punctuality.

Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality

All children are expected to have attendance of 96% or above. Where a child's attendance is below this for any reason, including sickness, parents will be contacted by the Attendance Officer.

Where a child's attendance falls below 96%, or where there are concerns about a child's attendance patterns or lateness, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer which may include a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The Education Welfare Team works with schools to identify families for early intervention support where pupils' attendance patterns indicate they are at risk of becoming persistent absentees from school.

The EWO has the authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents whose children have levels of unauthorised lateness which bring them below the Borough Target for attendance.



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This process will be initiated by a referral to the EWO from the Attendance Officer where there is a concern.

Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the Attendance Officer and a possible referral to the Educational Welfare Service. This could result in the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or court proceedings as directed by the Educational Welfare Officer.

The Head and Attendance Officer should be informed if any member of staff is concerned about a child's absences – both authorised and unauthorised, or regular late arrivals/collections. A meeting may be arranged with the parent/carer, Head, Attendance Officer to discuss any issues that may be causing poor attendance or punctuality, and to discuss support where appropriate. Attendance figures are reviewed weekly, for the purpose of newsletters, Leadership team, Safeguarding Team meetings where necessary.

Notes, records of telephone calls, and medical certificates should be kept by the member of staff who receives them. These notes should be kept in the class absence file and are regularly transferred to the child's individual school file at regular intervals. Please note that such documents may be required in legal proceedings.

When pupils return after a period of non-attendance

How a child is received back in school after a period of poor attendance or unauthorised absence may crucially influence whether he or she is to achieve and maintain an improvement in attendance. The following recommendations are made:

- Gentle encouragement and support in organising missed work helps to avoid the pupil feeling overwhelmed. This should be carefully coordinated beforehand if possible by the class teacher
- Parents should be actively involved in their child's reintegration. Inviting the parents into school and deciding on joint strategies may achieve this.
- Older pupils might be encouraged to act as helpers, befrienders or mentors to help to promote re-integration.
- Class teachers and tutors should promote within the tutor group a positive atmosphere which is welcoming to the returning pupil.
- Any internal support structure should be used flexibly.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the Attendance Officer in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties with attendance persist, the school will refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. The Pastoral Lead will meet with the allocated Educational Welfare Officer half termly to discuss attendance and data.



Appendix 1

Timings

Nursery: 8:50am – 11:50am Morning session
12:20pm – 3:20pm Afternoon session
Reception: 8:40am-3:15pm

For all other year groups and classes, school operates a soft start from **8.40 am**.

Registration for all children is at **8.55 am**. Children arriving after this time are considered **late**.

Pupil arrival and exit arrangements

Reception – arrive and exit through nursery entrance.

Nursery – arrive and exit through nursery entrance.

KS1 – Year 1 arrive and exit via main gate.

Year 2 arrive via ramp gate and pick up from KS2 Playground.

LKS2 – Year 3 arrive via step gate and pick up from KS2 Playground.

Year 4 arrive ramp gate and pick up from KS2 Playground.

UKS2 – Year 5 arrive via step gate and pick up from KS2 Playground.

Year 6 arrive via ramp gate pick up from KS2 Playground.

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| Headteacher: | | Date: | |
| Chair of Governing Body: | | Date: | |