



ST BENEDICT'S SCHOOL

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Authorised by: The Board of Governors of St Benedict's School

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1 Policy

For pupils to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided by the School, they must have high levels of attendance and punctuality. Ineffective registration or poorly executed follow-up procedures can increase the risks of truancy and educational under-performance, which can negatively affect person or/and social development among pupils. A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect or in itself may indicate that a pupil is at risk of significant harm. Consequently, attendance and registration arrangements are hugely important and must be seen to be regarded as such by pupils, parents, and staff.

According to [government advice](#), a pupil is considered persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of their time in school.

In this policy the word parent can be taken to mean anyone who has parental responsibility for one of our students. St Benedict's requires that each student has more than one emergency contact number for each pupil so that it is easy to make contact with regard to attendance issues. It is particularly important that parents inform school if they are away overnight or longer and let school know who has parental responsibility in their absence.

2 Aims

A key characteristic of a Benedictine School is 'Discipline of Daily Practice'. This recognises that all people but especially children benefit from a regular and ordered life. This policy therefore promotes high levels of attendance and punctuality of pupils at the School.

3 Statutory Framework

This school policy has been drafted in line with [Working together to improve school attendance \(2022\)](#) (WttISA) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures: statutory guidance \(2015\)](#). The School also complies with guidance published by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and advice published by the London Borough of Ealing.

4 Responsibilities of Parents

Parents with a child of compulsory school age have a legal duty to make sure that their child receives effective full-time education. Children must be in some form of education or training from the term after a child's fifth birthday up to their eighteenth birthday. Parents have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and 'this means their child must attend every day that school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.' (WttISA)

Parents are responsible for informing the school on any occasion when their daughter or son is unable to attend due to illness, or a medical appointment, providing the reason for their daughter or son's

non-attendance. This should be done by emailing attendance@stbenedicts.org.uk or jsattendance@stbenedicts.org.uk or by telephoning 020 8862 2000 (SS) / 020 8862 2050 (JS). This should be done as far as possible in advance and at the very latest by 8.40am on the morning of the absence, by which time pupils must be on site. St Benedict's will ask for evidence, where possible, to support absence of students where they are 'persistently absent' (attendance under 90%) as we are required to account for students who are persistently absent with Ealing Council.

Parents wishing to take their daughter or son out of school for exceptional reason, such as attending a funeral or wedding or religious observance, must seek authorisation for the absence from the School by writing to the Headmaster. The Headmaster will confirm whether the circumstances meet the definition of 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave of absence may be granted by the School. Where parents fail to ensure regular attendance, the School has a duty to contact Ealing social services, as a failure to enforce attendance is a safeguarding concern.

When parents/guardians are to be away from home overnight during term, they are required in the contract with the School to inform us of the name and contact number for a temporary guardian. This information should be provided to the Form Tutor/Tutor and should be copied to the relevant Head of Key Stage/Head of Year.

Parents can see their child's attendance on the school portal, Firefly, and school will contact parents directly if attendance patterns are causing concern.

5 Responsibilities of Pupils

Pupils have a responsibility to attend school when they are fit and well and to arrive at school in time for registration (morning and afternoon) each day during term time.

If, for any reason a pupil needs to leave the School site during the School day, their parent must contact the Form Tutor/Tutor or the attendance email address in advance of this or their child must bring in a note from their parents requesting this absence and giving the reason why. This should be handed to their Form Tutor/Tutor during morning registration. The Form Tutor/Tutor or School Office will then update SIMS regarding the absence. The School Office will not allow any pupils/students to exit School during school time, without prior consent from the parents.

Failure to attend school regularly or punctually or failing to attend registration without good reason constitute breaches of the Code of Conduct and may lead to formal disciplinary action being taken.

6 Responsibilities of the School

The Senior Deputy Head of the Senior School, Mr Ramsden, has responsibility for attendance in the Senior School, and the Pastoral Lead and Assistant Head, Miss Powell, has responsibility for attendance in the Junior School.

St Benedict's has a culture which promotes the benefits of high attendance, both in terms of the social health and wellbeing of students and also their academic attainment. It has a responsibility for taking and maintaining an accurate School Register of all pupils twice each day throughout term time: once at the beginning of the morning session and once in the second (afternoon) session. Every entry in the School Register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made and this is done on our SIMS system. Likewise, a back-up copy of the School Register will be retained for three years.

Academic staff in the Senior School also take registers of each academic lesson.

The senior member of staff responsible in the junior and senior school regularly monitor and evaluate patterns of poor attendance so that the School can work together with parents and students to improve attendance. Attendance data is discussed in pastoral meetings to identify pupils who need particular support.

Each term at the governors' safeguarding meeting attendance is discussed looking at broader patterns and trends along with strategies to improve/maintain good rates of attendance.

Where St Benedict's has pupils with severe absence (attendance below 50% - exceptionally rare at this school) or persistent absence (attendance below 90%) the pastoral team work closely with the student and the parents to create a plan that support improved attendance.

In the first instance if a pupil/student is regularly absent for medical reasons such that attendance falls below 90%, the Head of Key Stage / Head of Year will generally ask for any further absences to be accompanied by a doctor's note or other medical evidence to support the absence.

In the vast majority of these cases low attendance is related to medical factors, and it is understood that in those circumstances the wellbeing of the student is more important than improving attendance statistics as stated in WttlISA: 'schools should sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties.' Where appropriate St Benedict's will seek advice from ECIRS (Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service) for advice and work with the local authority to remove barriers to attendance where this seems necessary.

The School will inform the LEA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly without the School's permission.

The School will also inform the relevant LEA and/or Children's Social Care (CSC), as appropriate, immediately if:

- A single absence raises child protection concerns (see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)
- A pupil has any unexplained **unauthorised** absence.
- A pupil of compulsory school age is to be deleted from the school register when the next school is not known. In this last case, the School is required to report the circumstances, as

soon as possible after the grounds for deletion are met, to the LEA in which the pupil lives and in any event before the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated but severe absence for unauthorised reasons 'it is likely to constitute neglect' (WttISA) and a referral will be made to ECIRS if not made already.

Lateness is managed through the school disciplinary policy and students received a demerit if they are late for morning or afternoon registration without good reason provided by parents. This encourages punctuality and flags up persistent lateness with tutors and heads of year very quickly.

7 Registration Procedure

The Form Tutors/Tutors have primary responsibility for registering their tutees in the morning and following up absenteeism and lateness. Form Tutors / Tutors / Subject Specialists will take the attendance register at the start of each session of each school day during the AM Registration Period and during the PM Registration Period.

In the morning, pupils should be at school by 8:30, so that they are punctual for morning registration at 8:40 in their Form Rooms.

- Pupils in Years R-6 (Reception – Form 2) arriving late (after 8.40am) should go directly to the JS Reception.
- Pupils in Years 7-11 (Third Form – Upper Fifth) arriving late (after 8.40am) should go directly to the SS School Reception and sign in there.
- Sixth Form students arriving late should enter via the Sixth Form entrance as normal but must register with the Sixth Form Administrator.

If there is no explanation for absence, a text will be sent to the parents by the School Reception in the morning, alerting them to their daughter or son's absence. If no contact is received from parents to explain the absence, a phone call will be made to the Parents, and if there is still no contact, they will inform the Deputy Head. The Sixth Form Administrator will do this. The register for the morning session closes by 9am. Pupils and students arriving after this time will be marked absent for the am session.

The Deputy Head will contact parents within 24 hours, and ideally on the same day, if a pupil/student is missing without an explanation and if the parent has still not responded to the School.

Senior School Games registers are taken at 1.30pm by Tutors in form bases for pupils/students in Years 7-11. Sixth Form students are registered by their games teacher at the start of the games session.

For St Benedict's School the registration codes used by tutors when registering are as follows:

/ Present AM

\ Present PM

N Absent with no reason yet provided

Absences related to School activities should be recorded as follows:

V Educational Visit

P Approved sporting activity

D Approved on-site activity

S Study Leave

G Off Games (only to be used if off-games but on-site)

Where the School receives clear notification from parents, other absences may be recorded as follows:

A Medical or dental appointment

M Illness

I Interview

R Religious observance

H Holiday

C Other authorised circumstances