

Student Attendance

Bishop Milner Catholic College encourages good attendance and punctuality because students who attend regularly learn most effectively. It has been proven that good attendance is linked to better GCSE grades. Our attendance target for every student at Bishop Milner Catholic College is 100% in an academic year.

Our Attendance Officer, Mrs Heath, works with parents and students to encourage good attendance for all students. The Attendance Officer will contact home on the first day of absence if we have not received a message from a parent/carer. Regular meetings take place to discuss attendance with parents and students to establish how the college can best support students.

If your child is ill or absent from College

A parent /carer must inform the college before 10am **each day of the child's absence**.

College will contact parents if we are not informed. Failure to send an explanation will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'. If your child will be late in or has to leave college for a medical appointment please inform the college **beforehand**.

To report an absence, call the college on 01384 889422 and choose Option 1 – Attendance.

Then to leave a message use 'Option 1' or to speak to Mrs Heath, Attendance Officer, choose

'Option 2'

Please clearly state

- the child's full name
- tutor group
- the reason for the absence and how long you expect the absence to be for.
- who is reporting the absence

You may also use the SchoolComms app to report your child's absence/attendance at an appointment.

Mrs Heath may call you back to clarify the reason for the absence or for further information.

Condoned Absence

If your child is reluctant to attend please do not cover for them by condoning their absence. Please be aware that the college DOES NOT have to accept the reasons you give for your child's absence, and ONLY the college can authorise the absence, it is not an automatic right. We reserve the right to investigate any student absence.

Medical Appointments

Wherever possible please arrange appointments outside of college hours.

If your child will be late in or has to leave college for a medical appointment, please inform the college prior to the appointment. Please provide an appointment card or letter as proof of the appointment. Without this your child may not be released from college or the leave will be unauthorised.

It is expected that usually a student will not be absent for a whole day due to an appointment, and the student is expected to return to college after the appointment time. College may not authorise the absence if it is reasonably expected that your child could return to college and does not.

Persistent Absence

Absence at Bishop Milner is regularly monitored and parents are kept informed of their child's attendance and punctuality.

- First day contact with parent/carer will take place for all students without a known reason for absence (e.g. telephone or text).
- There will be early contact with parents in relation to attendance matters. Students with poor attendance/punctuality and their parent/carer will be invited to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer in college.
- A letter will be sent out every term to parents of students who fall below 96%.
- The college will regularly monitor those students with less than 94% attendance and poor

punctuality, working with parents to ensure improvements in attendance and punctuality. A follow up meeting will be offered at the end of each term for students with continuing absence. Those students with attendance at 94% or less will be required to provide medical evidence for authorised absence.

- An Attendance Clinic will be run three times a year (December, April and July) by the Attendance Officer in the college for students whose attendance falls below 92%.
- Students will be referred to the EIS according to the current referral procedure. The EIS will work with the students and their families to encourage better attendance and to set attendance targets.
- Students with poor attendance/punctuality and their parent/carer will be invited to attend an Attendance Clinic run by the Attendance Officer in college.
- Students with 90% attendance or less may be referred to the EIS and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Research has established a very clear link between good attendance at college and good achievement and progress in tests and examinations. Ten days absence for a family holiday can result in students becoming persistent absentees. Studies show that students who are in the persistent absentee category are much less likely to succeed in college than those who are not.

Persistent absence is currently any student that has 90% attendance or less. This means that a student who is absent for 7 sessions (a morning or an afternoon counts as one session) or more over a half term period **for whatever reason, authorised or unauthorised**, will be classed as a 'persistent absentee'. These students will be monitored closely and medical evidence will have to be provided to authorise their absence. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Ultimately, if students are not in college, they cannot learn.

Further information regarding absence/truancy can be found on the Dudley MBC website

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/learning-school/parental-support/dudley-education-investigation-service/absence-and-truancy/>

Punctuality

It is vital that all students are in college by 8.55am so that they can get to their classroom in time for registration taken at 9.00am. At 9.00am each morning the gate to the Broadway entrance will close and students will have to enter through the Burton Road gates.

We monitor lateness on a daily basis and if a student is late they will receive a break time detention, usually on the same day. Repeated lateness will result in a meeting with parents and possible further sanctions given.

Unfortunately, lateness is sometimes down to parents dropping students off late. Please support your child's learning by leaving home slightly earlier to get them here on time. Research shows a link between attendance at college and a child's achievement. Being late adds up to a loss of learning.

Minutes late per day	Equivalent of missing	
5 mins	3.4 college days a year	= 17 lessons
10 mins	6.9 college days a year	= 35 lessons
15 mins	10.3 college days a year	= 50 lessons
20 mins	13.8 college days a year	= 70 lessons
30 mins	20.7 college days a year	= 100 lessons

The college site is open from 8:00am and Breakfast Club is available in the canteen from 8:30am.

What Should I Do If I Want To Take My Child On Holiday In Term Time?

There is **NO** automatic entitlement in law for students to take leave during term time.

Any request for leave of absence **MUST** be made in advance in writing to the Principal by the parent/carer showing **exceptional circumstances** and **supplying additional evidence**. If an event

can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise the absence. **Absence during term time for holidays is, therefore, not considered an exceptional circumstance.**

If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event, please confirm the date of the event and your travel arrangements.

Absence for a bereavement of a **close family** member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral only, NOT extended leave.

Only the college and its' Academy Committee have the discretion to authorise any absence in a college year. The college has the right to take into consideration any others factors as deemed appropriate on application.

If the family choose to take the leave without authorisation, they must accept it will be recorded as **unauthorised absence**. Unauthorised absence is carefully monitored and leave of absence taken without authorisation may result in a fixed penalty fine of up to £120 per student for each responsible adult.

If the leave is authorised the student must return within the agreed leave period. The college has the right to delete the student from the admission register if the student does not return within the agreed time. The parents/carers may also be issued with a penalty notice for the unauthorised period of absence.

Re-admission to college cannot be guaranteed.

Further information on the changes in legislation can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Penalty Notices

1. When a student has 10 unauthorised absence sessions within 30 college days, the college will refer to EIS who will visit the property to give advice and guidance to the parent.
2. If a student's attendance does not improve and there are 20 sessions of unauthorised absence, then the college can request that the EIS make a home visit and an Advisory Warning Notice will be issued.
3. If a student has 30 unauthorised absence sessions the outcome will be up to 3 home visits and a Formal Advisory Warning Notice will be issued.
4. If a student's attendance does not improve and they reach 40 sessions of unauthorised absence, then the college can request that the EIS investigate and a penalty fine/prosecution may be considered.
5. If a request for a leave of absence has been refused or taken without seeking authorisation a penalty fine may be issued of up to £120 per student for each responsible adult.
6. From September 2006 Parenting Contracts/Orders have been in place to support and help parents/carers address their child's behaviour and attendance at college. These are entered voluntarily and consist of a two sided formal agreement between the parent/carer and the LA or Governing Body of the college.
7. If a child is identified in a public place within the first 6 days whilst on either a fixed term or permanent exclusion, the college can request that EIS investigate and a penalty fine considered.

Legal Measures for Tackling Persistent Absence

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts
- Parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- Prosecution.

Who is Affected by Penalty Notices for Non-attendance and other Legal Measures

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

All parents involved in the child's attendance are subject to the legal measures unless they do not have the capacity to change the attendance pattern. You must inform the college immediately and access a range of support offered if you feel you are unable to secure effective change in your child's attendance. The authorised person should consider every aspect of a student's circumstances before deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice.

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter or through the college's attendance policy and website.

The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned the absence (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence, the Education Investigation Service will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parent/carers for each child. N.B. This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent.

If you do not condone your child's absence you must notify the college immediately. Any adult who lives within the family home is deemed to have 'parental responsibility' and is responsible for the child and his/her absence.

In all cases involving a child in care the authorised person must also send a copy of the warning letter to the child's social worker, as well as to the Director of Children's Services for the local authority which has responsibility for the child if he/she is not exempt.

Attendance Support

My child is trying to avoid coming to college. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend college. If a child is reluctant to attend, a parent/carer should never cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter, and may make things worse.

Contact your child's Head of House or Mrs Heath, Attendance Officer, immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding college for a number of reasons, such as difficulties with college work, bullying, friendship problems and family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend college and work together to tackle the problem.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend College?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home a student planner. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it weekly. Be interested in what your child is doing in college, talk to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch.

Attendance Rewards

Students at Bishop Milner Catholic College are rewarded for their excellent attendance in a variety of ways.

In order to celebrate the students' attendance those who achieve 100% attendance per half term will be awarded a 100% certificate. At the end of the Summer term students who have the wonderful achievement of being in college and getting 100% attendance for the whole year will receive a £10 gift token and will have a special mention in the Celebration newsletter.

At the end of each term the house with the highest attendance is presented with the Attendance Trophy. The Tutor Group and House with the highest attendance are also celebrated in the Parental Circular and every student in that house/ tutor receives a treat.