



Listen, Love, Learn

At Our Lady's –

We are inspired, strengthened and encouraged by our Catholic faith.

We place Jesus at the centre of everything we do and say, **listening** to Him with our hearts.

We spread **love** everywhere we go, valuing and caring for each other.

We strive to be the best **learners** we can, using and celebrating our God given gifts.

"For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and Holy is his name" Luke 1: 49



"It is not enough to love the young;
they must know that they are loved."
Don Bosco

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and child protection policies.

Bosco Catholic Education Trust Mission Statement

The Bosco Catholic Education Trust ("the Trust") is a Christ-centred family of Catholic academies, within the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton, working together as one body to provide an outstanding education for all. As Catholic schools, we endeavour to develop confident, compassionate and faithful young people. Through partnership, collaboration, and mutual support, we seek to enable all those entrusted to our care to become the person God called them to be.

"Serve the Lord joyfully"

Approved:	For review:
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1. Aims

Our Lady Queen of Heaven attendance policy aims to:

- Encourage the highest levels of attendance and punctuality
- Support pupils and their parents/carers to achieve this
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to attendance
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

2. Being at School

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Attending school encourages peer interaction and good social skills and develops understanding of core values of co-operation and respect.

At Our Lady Queen of Heaven School we strive to ensure that our school is a vibrant place for learning. We want all our pupils to enjoy being at school, and to be enthused and motivated by their learning.

We will work in partnership with parents and carers to make their child's education a success and to ensure that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. We will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their child/ren arrive at school promptly.

Evidence indicates that only 1 in 20 (18%) of severely absent pupils, those with attendance of 50% or below, get five good GCSEs. For those who are defined as having persistent absence (above 10%), this leads to 36% gaining five or more good GCSEs. It is clear that nationally those eligible for free school meals are more likely to have higher levels of absence.

In contrast, 78% of students who were rarely absent got five or more good GCSE grades.

The 'habits for learning' and engagement in education are formed at an early stage and it is therefore essential to promote high attendance and engagement in primary education.

A score of 90% sounds like a great success yet for attendance this would mean missing one day every fortnight or 19 days, this equates to nearly a month of the academic year.

To evaluate the work we do in these areas we review current priorities and develop best practice in the trust for both primary and secondary schools. This includes current research such as that of the [Education Endowment Foundation](#).

3. Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- Ensure that they contact school **daily** whenever their child is unable to attend school
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

At Our Lady Queen of Heaven, we will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe, stimulating and vibrant learning environment, and one which is enriched by our Catholic values and beliefs.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils.
- Regularly review attendance data as a school to track patterns and address any key issues including persistent absence and use of exclusion.
- Engage in research on best practice from the Education Endowment Foundation and other research to support disadvantaged students and their attendance.
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly, referring irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set out by Education Welfare may result in legal action being taken.
- Notify Education Welfare after 20 unexplained or unauthorised absences in a set period
- At Our Lady Queen of Heaven we seek advice and offer support to pupils and their families, where attendance is a concern, with Educational Welfare Services (WPA). Support is tailored to meet the needs of each pupil and their family helping to achieved consistent attendance and good outcomes for all.

4. Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Arriving at school on time is crucial. Lateness in school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

By law, Our Lady Queen of Heaven school must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Registration takes place at a time determined by the school and pupils who arrive after that time will be recorded as late to school.

- Classes are open from 8.40am until 3.10pm each day. Gates open at 8.40am and close at 8.55am. Children who arrive between 8.55 am and 9.05am will result in a late code but not an absence. Registers at Our Lady Queen of Heaven close at 9.05am in the morning. If pupils arrive after the registers have closed it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- After Registers close any lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with by the school but may also be referred to Education Welfare and may be subject to prosecution by the local authority
- Afternoon registration is taken after lunch
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality are recorded on their report.

5. Pupils Leaving during the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.

- Wherever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving school and signed back in on their return.
- When a parent is collecting a pupil from the school, the parent should report to the school reception before the pupil leaves the site.
- Pupils are registered formally twice each day.

6. Leave of Absence

- The school holiday dates are published a year in advance. INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed on the dates, but they may be subject to change.
- In line with the Government's amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, leave of absence during term time will NOT be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances and the leave of absence has been agreed by the Head teacher.
- In exceptional circumstances, permission may only be granted for a maximum of five days (ten sessions).
- Where a leave of absence is to be considered, a leave of absence form must be requested from Reception and submitted for consideration
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

7. Attendance and absence

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments –
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Child performance: The amendments made to regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 on leave of absence do not affect the section that allows the parent of a child performer to seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. The amendments affect section 3 and 4 of regulation 7, which relate to leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. Section 2 of Regulation 7 (which has not been amended) still enables a head teacher to grant leave of absence for a pupil to undertake employment during school hours for the purpose of taking part in a performance within the meaning of section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963. Legislation sets out that a local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Where the license specifies the dates that a child is to be away from school to perform, then the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence. However, where the terms of the license do not specify dates it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise leave of absence. Head teachers should be sympathetic to requests that are supported by a licence, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a child's education.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If a pupil is having absences far above the national norm and their peers and/or there are patterns of absence, the school have the right to ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Legal sanctions

Schools can apply to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice by the Local Authority, parents must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to request the issue of a penalty notice ultimately rests with the head teacher, following the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

8. Changing Schools

- It is important that if families decide to send their child/ren to a different school they inform Our Lady Queen of Heaven school as soon as possible.
- A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:
 - The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
 - The address of the new school
 - A new home address if appropriate
 - The child has started at the new school.
- The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school.
- If the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to Education Welfare as a Child Missing in Education.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)

- > [The Education Act 2002](#)
- > [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- > [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- > [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- > [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- > [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- > [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- > [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- > <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>