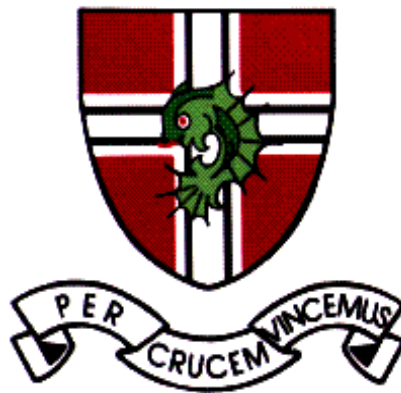


# **St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy**



## **Attendance Policy**

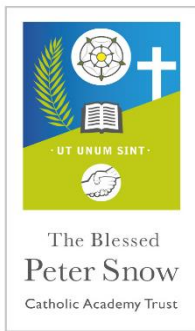
**June 2017**

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## The Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust



The Catholic Voluntary Academies which form the Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust are distinctive as we provide grounding in the Catholic Faith for all our children. The special character of our Catholic academies is the quality of the religious teaching, integrated into the overall education of our children. Our beliefs, which are Gospel centred, affect the way we live, making our academies living examples of Christ and His teachings.

*"Education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full – in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator." (Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Teachers and Religious, Twickenham, September 2010).*

**Our Academies therefore operate and are informed by the following four key principles of Christian formation:**

- **Places of Discipleship**
- **Places where Communities are created**
- **Places of Learning**
- **Places where we treasure God's World**

**In light of the above principles, the Trust aims to:**

- ensure secure, welcoming and engaging environments in which all individuals learn to value and respect both themselves and others
- provide all individuals with the opportunities to achieve excellence, to develop their full potential as human beings and to encourage and challenge them to do so
- uphold the unshakable belief in the unique potential of each child, student and member of staff
- provide a curriculum that initiates students into the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills they need to become mature Christian adults in their personal, social, family and working lives.

This is a successful school. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly, and all children should therefore be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

## **1. Why regular attendance is so important:**

**Learning:** Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent / carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

### **To help us all to focus on attendance, the Academy will:**

- Report to parents / carers at each assessment and effort point (three times a year in Year 7, 8, 9; five times a year in Year 10; four times a year in Year 11) on how their child is performing in the Academy, what their attendance percentage is and what their effort score is;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying form and year group monthly statistics;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and house points.

## **2. The Law relating to attendance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

## **3. The Law relating to safeguarding**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

## **4. Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from the Academy has to be classified by the school (not by the parents / carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why

information about the cause of any absence is always required and in writing. Please see Appendix 1 for a complete list of absence codes.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the Academy does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices, Local Authority sanctions and/or legal proceedings. (Please see Appendix 2). Unauthorised absence includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at the Academy 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.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the Academy, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

## **5. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and school needs parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through the Academy pastoral system and this is combined with mentoring where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Office.

## 6. Absence Procedures:

### If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact the Academy by phone as soon as possible on the first day of absence. They must give the reason for absence. If a child is ill they must give the specific reason.
- Write a note in the Planner on the first day the pupil returns with an explanation of the absence – this must be done even if the parent/carer has already telephoned the Academy.

### If a child is absent the Academy will:

- Telephone or text parents / carers on the first day of absence if the Academy have not heard from them
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation with the Directors of Study if the situation persists
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

### Telephone numbers:

There are times when the Academy need to contact parents about many things, including absence, therefore up to date contact numbers must be provided at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

## 7. Roles and responsibilities of staff and governors:

Academy roles	Responsibilities
Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Set challenging targets to exceed national averages for the Academy overall. Ensure strategy is devised to make solid progress towards them</li><li>• Receive reports on attendance at whole school level Ensure attendance is given a high status in the Academy.</li></ul>
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support Governors in setting challenging targets to exceed national averages for the Academy overall. Take responsibility for devising strategy to make solid progress towards targets set</li><li>• Report statistics to the Governing body. Compare each half-term's figures with those for the previous year at the same time</li><li>• Receive reports on attendance at whole school level. Give attendance a high status in the Academy. Encourage teachers to take responsibility for making improvements</li><li>• Take a personal interest in attendance and support intervention.</li><li>• Support Assistant Headteacher Pupil Welfare and Achievement (AHTPWA) in supervision of attendance management. Ensure that data is analysed and contact maintained with Local Authority officers. Enable the AHTPWA to lead on Academy policy and strategy.</li></ul>

Assistant Headteacher Pupil Welfare and Achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Headteacher to agree relevant internal attendance targets. Monitor attendance weekly and evaluate progress towards the targets with Directors of Study. Identify pupils who are likely to jeopardise the Academy’s performance and plan early intervention to avoid bad habits being established.</li> <li>• Monitor attendance at school, year group and class level. Work in strong collaboration with the Pastoral team.</li> <li>• Monitor the Attendance Policy recommending alterations to the Headteacher and Governors as required</li> <li>• Ensure attendance is given a high priority in the Academy.</li> <li>• Promote regular attendance, by making use of reward systems, assemblies, parents’ evenings, performance reviews, etc.</li> <li>• Supervise administrative staff. Ensure registers are checked daily and that the required action at each threshold level is taken at the earliest moment possible.</li> <li>• Revise strategy to address issues with each individual pupil or family.</li> </ul>
Class Teacher / Form Tutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that poor attendance is not accepted. Make 100% attendance the expectation.</li> <li>• Promote regular attendance through rewards and other encouragement.</li> <li>• Ensure that registers are always completed appropriately.</li> <li>• Review monthly attendance data, check patterns of absence and overall levels of attendance of individuals.</li> <li>• Work with parents of pupils who have regular absence, or patterns of irregular attendance.</li> <li>• Ensure the Director of Study is informed of concerns over attendance.</li> <li>• Following absence, ensure a reason is provided and the relevant code entered onto SIMS.</li> </ul>
Attendance Administrator and Pastoral Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the Academy’s procedures for first day calling. If no explanation has been received by the time registers close, seek one by phone or text.</li> <li>• Be prepared to be assertive. Parents must explain absence. Explanations need to be plausible.</li> <li>• Issue attendance letters where required. Seek advice when needed.</li> <li>• Hold regular discussions with the Directors of Study.</li> <li>• Advise the Directors of Study of any teacher who fails to maintain the register properly. Registers are a legal requirement and must be kept carefully and accurately.</li> <li>• Provide data on weekly basis to class teachers and the Pastoral team.</li> <li>• Assist the Pastoral team in collating data for inclusion in reports, attendance returns, etc.</li> <li>• Pass messages from parents efficiently to the class teacher or other relevant member of staff.</li> </ul>

## **8. Shared responsibility between The Academy and the Attendance and Pupil Support Office (APSO):**

- Regular monitoring of attendance levels across whole school, classes, year groups, tutor groups and at individual pupil level, particularly persistent absentees and other vulnerable groups.
- Continued liaison with pupils and families.
- Academy based strategies and interventions – meetings in school, re-integration programmes, meetings with parents, report and monitoring systems.
- Appropriate categorisation of absence, advised by APSO if necessary
- Maintenance of records relating to contact from parents, submission of notes, telephone contact, medical certificates, change of address etc.
- APSO to maintain accurate and contemporaneous notes of contact and interventions with pupil and family
- Monitoring of vulnerable groups (see below)

## **9. Vulnerable pupils:**

The following groups of pupils should be known to the Directors of Study in the Academy and they should support the continuity of learning for these pupils. Where pupils exhibit problems with regular school attendance, such matters should be discussed with the APSO so that consideration can be made for appropriate referrals to ensure that child and family are supported to access education

- Teenage parents
- Gypsy, Roma and Travellers
- Asylum seekers and Refugees
- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Children with a Child Protection (CP) plan
- Children missing from education / not receiving suitable education
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Young Carers

## **10. Children Missing Education:**

The Academy must inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of the Academy by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- Have ceased to attend the Academy and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend the Academy
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period
- Have been permanently excluded.



The Local Authority should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made. The Local Authority should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

## **11. Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. 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.

### **How the Academy manages lateness:**

The school day starts at **9.00 am** and all pupils are expected to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by **9.05 am** and all pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.10am** the form registers will be closed. If a pupil arrives during Period 1 they will receive a Late mark. Subsequent to this, in accordance with regulations, if a pupil arrives after this time they will receive a mark which indicates they are on site, but this will not count as a present mark for that session, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents / carers could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a pupil has a persistent late record parents / carers will be asked to meet with the Director of Study to resolve the problem. Parents / carers can approach the Academy at any time if they are having problems getting their child to the Academy on time.

## **12. Holidays In Term Time:**

Absence in term time will affect a child's schooling and the Academy expects parents / carers to help by not taking children away in school time. Any savings that parents / carers think they may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to the child's education. There is **no automatic entitlement** in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance, in writing to the Headteacher. These will not normally be granted. In making a decision the Academy will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Please refer to Appendix 3 for full details of this. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the Academy, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

## **13. Study Leave:**

Study leave is not granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete, and study leave is only ever granted to pupils in Year 11 or the Sixth Form. During

granted study leave, provision is made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into the Academy to revise.

All pupils are different and have different requirements and preferences when preparing for examinations. The Academy recognises that study leave is a chance for pupils to develop their independent study which will help them when they move to post-16 provision, where a self-study approach is commonly used.

#### **14. Elective Home Education:**

A parent / carer is entitled to choose to educate their child other than by the Local Authority provision. They may choose an independent school or may decide to provide the education themselves or by others. Procedures for this type of home education can be found in Appendix 4.

#### **15. Summary:**

The Academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents / carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents / carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

## Appendix 1

### National Attendance Codes, Descriptions and meanings

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late ( before registers closed)	Present
D	Dual Registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)	Approved Educational Activity ( <i>counts as PRESENT for attendance registration purposes</i> )
B	Educated Off-Site (NOT Dual Registration)	Approved Educational Activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appts etc)	Authorised absence
M	Medical / Dental appointments	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
H	Family Holiday ( <i>that has been agreed in advance with the Academy</i> )	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday ( <i>that has been agreed in advance with the Academy</i> )	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
C	Other authorised / exceptional circumstances ( <i>not covered by any other appropriate code/description</i> ) <i>this includes enforced closure for some pupils</i>	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
U	Late ( <i>after registers closed</i> )	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence ( <i>not covered by any other code/description</i> )	Unauthorised absence
G	Family Holiday ( <i>NOT agreed in advance OR days in excess of agreement</i> )	Unauthorised absence
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure ( <i>of whole school</i> )	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances

## **Appendix 2**

### **Statutory Intervention – Attendance**

The Education Attendance Service carries out the Local Authority's legal function to enforce school attendance. The available measures are as follows.

#### **Penalty Notices**

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduces penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution. The Penalty Notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. If it is not paid within 21 days it will increase to £120, which must be paid within 28 days of the initial issuing of the Penalty Notice. Failure to do so will result in the parent(s) being prosecuted in the Magistrates Court. The Local Authority are responsible for the collection of fines. If the attendance of a child improves but the fine remains unpaid then the parent must still be prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

#### **Prosecution of parents under sections 444 / 444 1 (a) of the Education Act 1996**

S444 Education Act 1996 states *'if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, his / her parent is guilty of an offence'*. This offence is one of 'strict liability', a legal term that means that the offence is committed whether the parent knew the child was absent or not. It is not a defence to say that the parents have tried everything in their power to get the child to school. The parent's efforts could be raised in mitigation if they were found guilty but would not amount to an outright defence. Defences against s.444 are specific and set out in that section of the Act. The penalty for the offence is a fine of up to £1,000 for each parent. One of the available defences, absence due to an 'unavoidable cause', only relates to a cause connected with the child. Under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996 as inserted by s72 Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2000, both parents can be prosecuted for an aggravated offence when the child fails to attend school with the parent's knowledge but the parent fails without reasonable excuse to cause the child to attend. This offence carries a maximum fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment. The aggravated offence was introduced after the consultative exercise 'Tackling Truancy Together'. If parents facing the aggravated offence fail to turn up at court it is likely that a warrant for their arrest would be issued. The possible outcomes following a conviction for the lesser offence are a fine, an Education Supervision Order, Community Order, a Parenting Order, a Conditional Discharge or an Absolute Discharge. For the aggravated offence, a custodial sentence is possible.

#### **School Attendance Orders s.437-443 Education Act 1996**

School Attendance Orders (SAOs) are used when a child of compulsory school age is not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education and where the authority believes that the child should attend school. They are not to be used for children who are on the roll of a school. Failure to comply with an SAO will lead to a prosecution under section 443 and is a criminal offence carrying a maximum fine of £1,000 per parent.

#### **Education Supervision Orders s.36 Children Act 1989**

An Education Supervision Order (ESO) gives the LA more control in educating a child of compulsory school age. The LA may apply for an ESO instead of prosecuting the parents for poor attendance. ESOs are 1989 Children Act orders and as such the welfare of the child is

paramount. Parents must obey the reasonable directions given under an ESO and persistent failure to comply with reasonable directions is a criminal offence carrying a fine of £1,000.

### **Parenting Orders**

Magistrates may impose a Parenting Order under s8 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 if this would help prevent further pupil absence. The order will require parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions for up to 3 months. It may specify other requirements, for example ensuring the child is escorted to and from school for up to 12 months. Non-compliance with a Parenting Order can result in a further prosecution by the Police and carries a fine of £1,000 if convicted.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Term time holidays**

1. It is important to note that, as with all absence, it is the Headteacher and Governing Body who decide whether an absence is authorised or not. Holidays in term time are not, under any circumstances, an automatic right, and will not normally be granted. The following will be considered:
  - A holiday in term time should be related to exceptional circumstances.
  - That the granting of a request should be linked with an expectation of otherwise full attendance.
  - Only one period of absence in any academic year will be considered.
  - Parents should be informed that any absence taken without permission will be unauthorised and that this could result in the issuing of a fixed Penalty Notice or Prosecution where overall attendance is unsatisfactory.
  
2. It should be noted that a pupil who is absent for 10 days in a single academic year can only achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance, assuming no additional absence.
  
3. In exceptional circumstances, for instance the death of a family member living in another country, absence may be authorised. Under these circumstances, schools may delete from their roll any pupil who fails to return within 10 days of the agreed return date. However where there is good reason for continued absence this will not be done.

## Appendix 4 Elective Home Education (EHE)

The law states that all children of statutory school age must receive suitable education. The Local Authority has a duty to provide education. The parent is responsible for ensuring their child receives education. The Local Authority would encourage all children to attend and receive education in one of its schools or Pupil Referral Units. However a parent is entitled to choose to educate their child other than by the Local Authority provision. A parent may choose an independent school or may decide to provide the education themselves or by others.

If a parent chooses to make arrangements for their child other than at school the following procedures will take place.

### STEP 1

If child is on roll at school, parent must advise the Headteacher in writing of intention to education other than at school, additionally requesting that child's name is removed from the school roll. The school will then notify the Local Authority. If child is not on a school roll but is of statutory school age parents are advised, although not obliged, to notify the Local Authority of intention to educate other than at school.

### STEP 2

After notification parents will receive a form to complete and return to the Local Authority which details the arrangements made for providing child with suitable education. Parents will also receive information about educating the child other than at school. This information will include useful names and addresses of organisations independent of the Local Authority.

### STEP 3

On returning the form to the Local Authority, the Inspectorate Section are notified by the Local Authority. An inspector will write to parent to make an appointment to visit to discuss educational arrangements.

### STEP 4

The Inspector will compile a report based on their visit and any other information available. The Inspector within the report will have deemed whether the education provided is satisfactory or not. If the education is deemed **satisfactory** a review date will be arranged and child's name will be placed on the register of those children educated other than by the Local Authority.

If the education is deemed **unsatisfactory** a visit will be arranged by the Elective Home Education Officer with the intention of discussing the available options. Parent will be given time to make amendments to arrangements should they wish to pursue educating other than at school. A further visit will then be arranged by the Inspector to review the arrangements. If the arrangements are still deemed unsatisfactory, the Local Authority will give advice about finding a school place. Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full time education, but this does not have to be at a school.

### **Equality Impact Assessment -**

<b>School</b>	<b>St John Fisher</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>June 2017</b>
<b>Lead member of staff</b>	<b>C Kernan – Asst. Headteacher</b>
<b>Other involved staff/role</b>	

### **Proposed Plan**

Background/ how this proposal has come about

Reason for proposal – to introduce new practice/provision  
to change or reduce practice/provision  
to remove practice/provision

Main stakeholders

Any legislation or guidance that informs the proposals

Review and update of current policy.
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### **Is the proposal likely to have an adverse impact on compliance with the Equality Duty?**

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	<b>N</b>
Promoting equality of opportunity	<b>N</b>
Fostering good relations	<b>N</b>

Please explain

Policy is intended to support all students to achieve the best education possible.
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### **Consultation Process**

With whom do you plan to consult?

How?

Where is the evidence of the consultation?

Governing Body Standards Committee - Staff as appropriate
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## Potential Issues

Characteristic	Impact of proposal (specify if impact is to pupil, parent/carer, staff, governor, other)	Positive Negative Neutral	Can barrier be removed? Y/N
Disability	<b>Proposals are geared to supporting students in this category.</b>	<b>Positive</b>	
Race	<b>Avoiding disadvantage to children of different race was a consideration in writing this policy.</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	
Sex	<b>Avoiding disadvantage to children of different sex was a consideration in writing this policy.</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	
Gender reassignment		<b>Neutral</b>	
Pregnancy, maternity		<b>Neutral</b>	
Religion/belief		<b>Neutral</b>	
Sexual orientation		<b>Neutral</b>	
Marriage, civil partnership		<b>Neutral</b>	
Age		<b>Neutral</b>	

Explain in more detail