

Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College

Attendance and Punctuality policy



Introduction

At Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College we believe every student should strive for excellent attendance and punctuality to make the most of the opportunities that we have to offer. We believe that excellent attendance is vitally important for successful learning. Excellent attendance and punctuality also develop key life skills which are essential for success in the world beyond our college. It has been proven that attainment can be closely linked to attendance and in order to achieve their full potential students should aim for 100% attendance and excellent punctuality. 97% is the College baseline expectation.

We rely on our partnership with parents and carers to ensure all students make every reasonable attempt to be in college every day and on time. It is a parent / carers legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends college in a regular and committed manner. The Education Act 1996 states that parents and carers must ensure that their child receives a suitable education. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at college is a parent / carers legal responsibility and permitting absence from college without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. In support of this the following information outlines our commitments in ensuring that attendance at Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College continues to be of our highest priority.

Aims of our attendance policy:

- To ensure excellent levels of student attendance and punctuality
- To establish an ethos of 'attendance matters' through proactive strategies to promote excellent attendance and punctuality
- To work closely with parents / carers to fulfil our obligations to our students by placing high priority on attendance and punctuality of all students
- To ensure procedures within the college identify and follow up all absences and patterns of absence at our earliest opportunity
- To have a clear and consistently applied escalation process whilst understanding every student is unique
- To continuously develop the colleges celebration of excellent attendance and punctuality

Definitions of types of absence & legal sanctions

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from college for a very good reason e.g. illness or emergencies. The college understands that some hospital and or medical appointments will fall within the college day but we ask for support in trying to make non urgent appointments out of college time. Only the college can authorise an absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the college does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to The Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Examples include refusal to attend college, birthdays, shopping trips or looking after siblings.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

The Government classes a student as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of their education across the college year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents / carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any student that is seen to have reached the status of 'Persistently Absent' or is at risk of moving towards it is given priority and parents / carers will be informed of this. We expect parental cooperation and support in improving student attendance. If we do not have full support and engagement, we will regard this as a safeguarding and welfare concern. Students are tracked and monitored carefully by our Attendance Officer and pastoral systems. Parents /carers of students who are persistent absentees are likely to be subject to legal proceedings. We also reserve the right to make changes to a student's option choices and course studied if they are persistently absent. This will always be in their best interest.

Procedures

If a student is absent parents / carers must;

- Contact college via the app or the attendance line (01905 ext 203) before 8:50 a.m. on the first day of absence and every day thereafter.

If a student is absent the College will;

- Check our attendance line and log the reason for absence
- Telephone or text parents / carers if we have not had contact and a reason from the first day of absence
- Where appropriate carry out a home visit after three days if we are unable to establish contact and / or are concerned, this is to safeguard our student
- If a student is deemed to be absent for no real genuine reason we may come and collect the student and bring them to college ourselves (reference our home visit policy)
- We may request support from the police if we are unable to establish contact over a period of days
- Not set work, if students are well enough to work at home they should be in college unless there are exceptional circumstances involved
- Liaise with the MET in supporting students who are medically unable to attend college and are attending the MET.

Child Missing in Education Procedure

The college monitors attendance on a daily basis. If after three consecutive days of absence parents / carers have not contacted the college a home visit will take place.

If the child does not attend college for the seven days after the home visit and parents /carers are not communicating with the college then a report will be made to the Local Authority Child Missing Education Team.

Parents and carers should ensure that we have up to date contact numbers at all times. Ideally we should have up to five individuals we can contact in the event of an unexplained absence or emergency situation. It is a parental responsibility to provide this information.

Failure to ensure regular attendance

Every Student is expected to attend college 100% of the time unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher, Attendance Officer or the pastoral team. The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Worcestershire County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from college and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution against the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular college attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996. Penalty notices are issued per parent/carer per child, so a family of 2 parents and 2 children will receive 4 penalty notices.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they miss spending valuable time with their Form Tutor and will fail to get vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also cause disruption. Students deliberately missing form time or assembly time will be sanctioned.

How we manage lateness:

- The college day starts at 8:50 a.m. and we expect students to be in their form room or in Assembly at this time
- All entrances to college close at 8:50 a.m. except the main front gate where students will be recorded on the late document and receive a sanction that day
- If a student arrives after the registers have closed then they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark 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 punctuality problem persists
- If a student has a persistent late record parents / carers will be asked to meet with our Attendance Officer
- Students who arrive late without good reason deemed by us will receive a break or lunchtime detention that day. Failure to attend this will result in an SLT after college detention for 1 hour
- It is important to note that a proportion of our students travel by college bus services and we recognise they are sometimes unavoidably late. We would not detain a student for this lateness

Rewards

We have a number of attendance rewards in order to promote the importance of attendance and punctuality and our ethos that 'college attendance matters.' Below are some examples;

- All staff reward good attendance and punctuality on a daily basis through praise and encouragement
- Weekly assemblies promote attendance both individual and groups
- The weekly attendance figures are displayed on the college website with the college target
- Students with 100% attendance for each week will be entered into the attendance prize draw box for a prize periodically
- Attendance officer to send texts/certificates to students who have improved their attendance weekly
- Half termly - Attendance officer to send letters/certificates home for students with 100% attendance
- Termly - students with 100% attendance are awarded using the colleges reward system
- Yearly - students with 100% attendance are invited on a reward trip
- Students who have previously had poor attendance/punctuality and make significant improvements following intervention will be acknowledged accordingly

Holidays in term time

Holidays in term time are actively discouraged by the college and WCC.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's education as much as any other absence. We expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children away in college time. Remember that any savings that may be made by taking a holiday in college time are offset by the cost to a student's education and may result in a fine of up to £120 pounds being issued.

There is no automatic entitlement to any time off in term time. An application for leave of absence must be submitted at least 6 weeks prior to the requested date. No application for leave of absence will be granted if the student's attendance is below 95% for any reason.

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence or holiday in term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where an absence request is authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher he/ she will determine the number of days a student can be absent. Please note;

- Where an absence is approved it will be registered as authorised
- Where an absence is declined it will be registered as unauthorised (if taken)
- Each request for absence will be judged on a case by case basis
- Any leave of absence must be requested and agreed by the Headteacher 6 weeks in advance of the absence and before tickets are booked or travel arrangements are made

In deciding whether or not to grant the request for leave of absence the following will be taken into account;

- Overall pattern of attendance
- Our examination and assessment calendar
- Length, destination and purpose of the leave and whether it is likely to be a rare event in the life of the student
- Family circumstances

Should the college decide to grant leave of absence but, the student **does not return to college at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the college to justify the continuing absence or make known the whereabouts of the student, **his/her place at the college could be lost.**

A student's name can be removed from roll permanently if the student has been granted a leave of absence and after absence;

- S/he has not returned by the agreed date
- S/he has continued to be absent for a further twenty college days
- The Headteacher is not satisfied that this is because s/he is ill or the absence is unavoidable
- Before a student is removed from the college roll their case will first be referred to the Education Investigation Service

If a student is not present at the beginning of a college term we cannot guarantee that a place will remain available for them in college.

Where necessary, and in line with WCC guidelines, should the College decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their student out of college, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Holiday Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per student. If not paid within 21 days, this fine increases to £120 per parent per student. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court

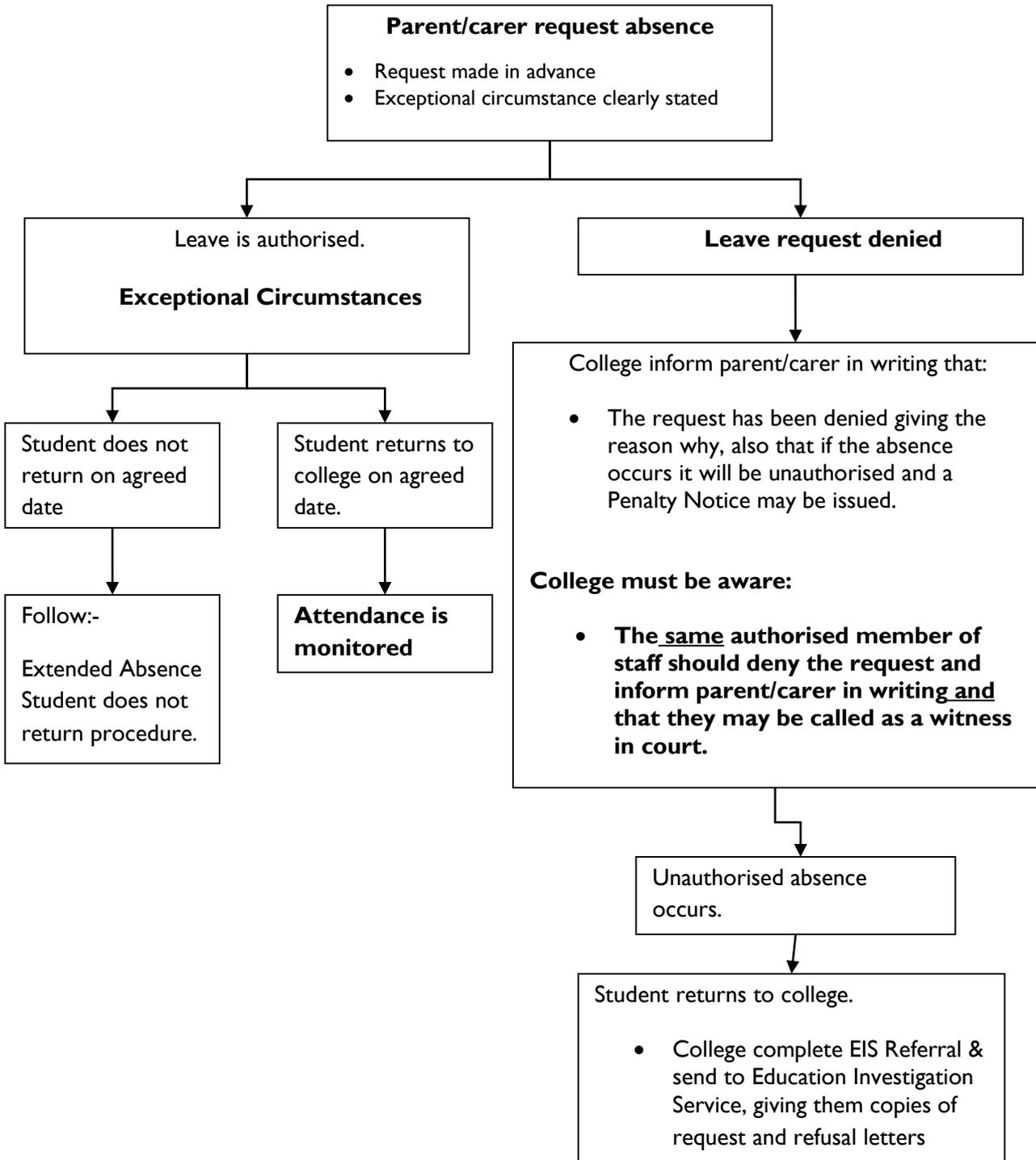
proceedings. This fine will be issued to both of the student's parents e.g. Student A is taken from college without authorisation from the Headteacher. This equates to Parent 1 being fined £60 and Parent 2 being fined £60. Should there be two students involved, Parent 1 is fined £120 and Parent 2 is fined £120 and so on if more students are taken out of college without authorisation.

Leavers

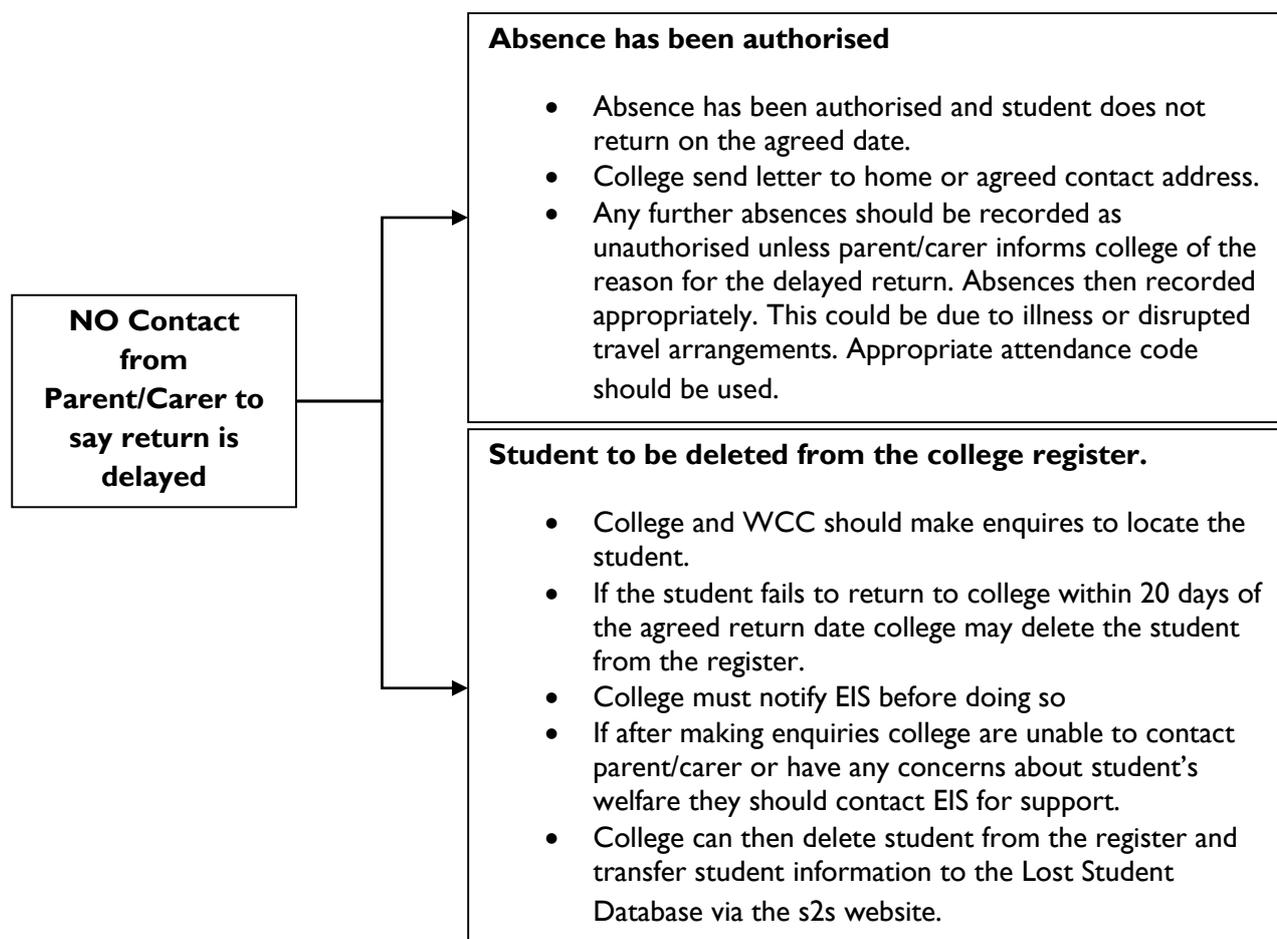
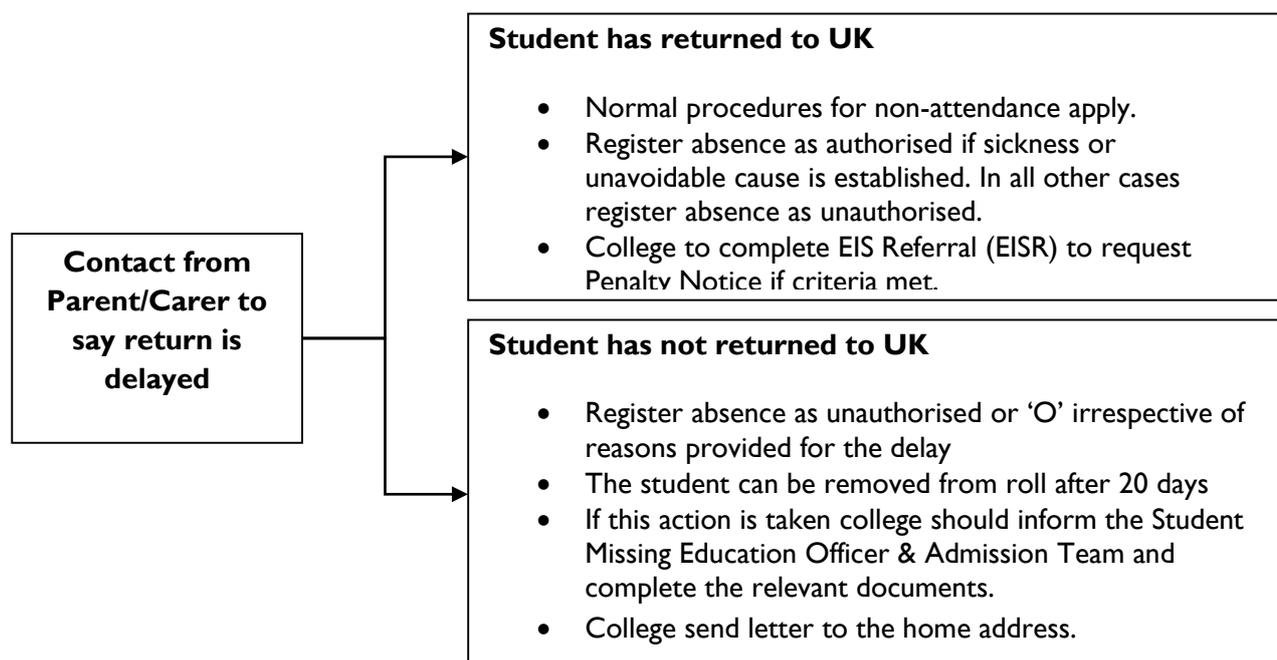
If your child is leaving our college (other than at the end of Year 11) parents and carers are asked to give the college comprehensive information about their plans. This includes a date of a move and new address and telephone numbers. As a college we also need to be informed of your child's new school and a start date that has been agreed. This should be submitted to the Headteacher in writing.

When a student leaves our college and we do not have information about where they have gone this child is considered to be a 'Child Missing from Education' and the local authority have a legal duty to follow this up and investigate. This includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies to try and locate the child. By liaising with us these investigations can be avoided.

Absence in term Time Authorisation Procedure



Absence in Term Time Student Does Not Return Procedure



Conclusion

This policy highlights the importance of attendance and punctuality for all our students at Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College. Our college is committed to working towards our attendance targets and milestones in striving towards the goal of 100% attendance for all. We consistently use a whole college approach to support and encourage parents/carers and students to attend college every day. We operate an open door policy and will always address individual needs to the best of our ability. In return we expect the support of both parents/carers and students in achieving the best possible levels of attendance.

Ratified by the Governing Body October 2018, to be reviewed annually.

Signed by Chair of Governors: _____