



Attendance Policy

Version 2

Note: This policy can only be considered current and valid when viewed on the VNHTT portal and website. If this document has been printed or saved from another location, you must check the version number matches that of the online copy.

Name of Author	Jonathan Boden (Head of Vantage North Humber Teacher Training (VNHTT))
Name of Responsible Committee/Individual	St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust (SCRCAAT) Board of Directors – Education Committee
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VNHTT Attendance Policy

1. Aims of the Policy

The primary aims of this policy are to ensure all trainees are **treated fairly**, to identify and address concerns regarding absence promptly, and to provide necessary support and advice to trainees in need. This policy enables the provider to exercise its **duty of care** and responsibilities in ensuring that its trainees pursue their studies with diligence and avail themselves of all educational opportunities. It recognizes that in an intensive, one-year course, absence for any reason leads to missed learning opportunities which may impact high-quality outcomes and the ability to provide evidence for the **Teachers' Standards**.

2. Introduction

Good attendance throughout the course is vital if trainees are to make the best possible progress at school placements and at core and school-based training sessions. Adhering to this policy contributes to trainees meeting **Part 2 of the Teaching Standards** (Personal and Professional Conduct), which requires teachers to maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality. This policy encompasses approaches to the management of absence commonly used in the teaching profession as a whole.

3. Responsibilities

- a. **All trainees** are responsible for maintaining regular attendance and ensuring any periods of absence, however short, are communicated and managed in accordance with this policy. Trainees must provide the contact details for a **named representative** who can be reached by the provider to confirm the trainee's safety in the event of an unreported absence.
- b. The **VNHTT leadership team** is responsible for overseeing absence levels and meeting with individual trainees to ensure they are supported, ideally addressing issues informally as they arise.
- c. The **VNHTT Operations Manager** is responsible for maintaining accurate records of absence.

4. Attendance Requirements

It is expected that a trainee will be **regular and punctual** in attendance at all centre and school-based sessions prescribed by the course. While VNHTT acknowledges that circumstances outside of a trainee's control may affect attendance, all absence should only occur in **unavoidable circumstances**. Professional standards must be maintained, as prospective employers may inquire about a trainee's history of absence.

5. Notifying Planned Absences

Trainees should notify the Operations Manager by email and wait for **authorization to be agreed** before finalizing plans. QTS will not be awarded until any required missed days are made up.

- **Medical and Dental:** Trainees should endeavour to arrange such appointments in their own time or at times that cause the minimum amount of absence, providing **proof of the appointment** to VNHTT.
- **Graduation Ceremonies:** Absence of **one day** to attend a ceremony for a first degree will be granted, with associated travel time not exceeding half a day.
- **Interviews:** All reasonable requests will be honoured, though travel time for distant interviews is limited to a **cumulative maximum of three working days** per year.
- **Compassionate Leave:** In the event of a serious accident, illness, or bereavement of an immediate family member, **up to three working days** are allowed (father, mother, child, sibling) and **up to five working days** for a spouse or partner. Additional compassionate leave can be granted at the reasonable discretion of the Head of VNHTT.
- **Private and Personal Business:** A maximum of **two days** may be granted for urgent, unforeseen personal commitments that cannot be undertaken at any other time.
- **Holidays:** Due to the intensive nature of the course, holidays should generally be avoided. However, where trainees have pre-booked holidays before the course commences, these should be communicated to the Head of VNHTT as soon as possible so arrangements can be made to accommodate them. Any other leave must be agreed in advance with the Head of VNHTT.

6. Reporting Procedure for Sickness Absence

First Day of Absence: You must inform your placement school, your mentor, and the VNHTT Operations Manager (Nhawxwell@vnhtt.org) **no later than 9:00 AM**. You must state your symptoms and expected duration of absence. If the provider has not been notified of your absence by this time, **we will make every reasonable effort to contact you by phone and email**. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact your named **emergency representative** to confirm your safety.

Sickness Certification:

- **Five Days or Less:** Trainees must complete a **self-certification form**.
- **More than Five Days:** You must obtain a **medical certificate** signed by your doctor and submit it to the VNHTT Operations Manager.
- **Cumulative self-certified absence monitoring:**
While a doctor's note is required after 7 consecutive days of absence, the programme will also monitor cumulative self-certified absence across the course. Where self-

certified absence reaches 6 days in total, this will trigger a review meeting to ensure appropriate support is in place and to monitor attendance going forward.

7. Uncontactable Trainees and Long-Term Illness

- **Uncontactable Trainees:** If after **ten working days** the provider cannot contact the trainee or their representative, studies will be **formally suspended** and Student Finance England (SFE) will be notified, which may impact maintenance loans and bursaries. After **twenty working days** of no contact, the trainee will be deemed to have **withdrawn** from the course.
- **Long-Term Illness:** If an absence exceeds **15 working days**, the provider will notify the trainee in writing that study is being **suspended on medical grounds**, and SFE will be informed. The situation will be reviewed to determine if the trainee should be considered for **deferral**.

8. Return to Training and Convalescence

Upon return from illness, the provider will ensure the trainee has a **few days' respite** from assessment loads to become fully fit. Trainees returning from an extended absence may be required to undergo a medical examination by **Occupational Health professionals** to determine if a **staged return** is necessary.

9. Salaried Trainees

Salaried trainees will first and foremost need to be aware and follow the staff absence policy and procedure of their host school. However, they must also use the reporting procedures outlined in this policy to ensure that VNHTT is fully informed and all attendance requirements met.

10. Failure to Report

Failure to report absence raises concerns regarding **Teaching Standards Part Two** and will result in a **VNHTT Support Plan**. As with all Support Plans, failure to meet targets set can result in a trainee being removed from or being asked to withdraw from the VNHTT training programme.

11. Poor attendance

When required, an **attendance review meeting** will be held to explore the circumstances around concerns over a trainee's attendance. Depending on the individual circumstances, trainees may be required to seek a medical examination because of health problems being experienced which are seriously affecting their capability to meet VNHTT attendance expectations. With the trainee's consent, VNHTT may refer the trainee for an Occupational Health assessment or request a report from the trainee's

general practitioner. Any mitigating circumstances reported in the assessment/report will be taken into consideration by the VNHTT team.

Following an attendance review meeting, a trainee will be supported to significantly improve and sustain their attendance record against the expected standards. This support will likely take the form of a **VNHTT Support Plan** drawn up a member of the VNHTT leadership team. A monitoring period will be set and concluded by the agreed review date recorded in the support plan. Mitigating circumstances established through attendance review meeting or Occupational Health assessment or report from the employee's general practitioner will be taken into account, and the VNHTT leadership team will take reasonable steps to support the trainee to improve their attendance.

Equal opportunities statement: This policy must be applied fairly and consistently. Some sickness absence may relate to a disability, as defined under the Equality Act 2010. Where this is the case, VNHTT will consider seeking advice from HR and Occupational Health.

Annex 1

Attendance Review Meeting

Trainee	
Phase / Subject	
Placement school	
Date of review meeting	
VNHTT reviewer	
Reasons for attendance concerns e.g. number of placement days, training sessions missed; patterns of absence identified; on-going attendance issues etc Include precise numbers.	
Reasons for absence	
Recommended actions (if required) e.g. referral to medical / Occupational Health / Counselling / additional monitoring / other support / Support Plan etc	

Trainee signature

Reviewer signature

Date