



St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School

Live the Gospel and when necessary use words

Our mission as a Roman Catholic primary school is to provide a catholic education that puts the word of God at the centre of our school. Our purpose is the happiness of all of our community through the pursuit of school-wide excellence; with success measured on our ability to sustain and enhance our position as a thriving example of Christ-centred education.

POLICY

ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY

Updated and ratified by the Governing Body: October 2018

Effective from: September 2019

Review date: September 2022 (or sooner according to changes in legislation)

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Statement of intent

St. Bernadette's RC Primary believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parent/carers follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:
"The parent/carer 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."
 - Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
 - Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
 - Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
 - Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
 - Rewarding regular attendance.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2018) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Keeping children safe in education
- Children Missing Education
- Child Protection Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The governing body has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of St. Bernadette's RC primary school.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- 2.2. The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parent/carers.
- 2.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:
 - Following the Attendance Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
 - Modelling good attendance behaviour.
 - Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- 2.4. Parent/carers are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.5. Parent/carers are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:
 - **“absence”** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.
 - An **“authorised absence”** as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.
 - Participation in sporting events may be considered.
 - An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
 - Keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
 - Absences without explanation.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed (without notice).
 - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Absence due to day trips or holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - Leaving school for no explainable reason during the day.

- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
 - Missing more than 10 percent of schooling (at any point) across the year **for any reason.**

4. Attendance monitoring procedures

- 4.1 Parent/carers are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child’s absence in person, by telephone or Parentmail APP providing a reason for the absence.
- 4.2 A phone call will be made or a text message sent to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their child’s absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 4.3 The school will inform the LA, on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school sessions (5 days) or more without permission.
- 4.4 If a pupil’s attendance drops below 96%, parents/carers will be informed via a letter and a meeting may be requested.
- 4.5 Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

5. Persistent absent

- 5.1 If a pupil is persistently absent e.g. their attendance falls below 90%, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher and / or the attendance officer who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent/carer agreement.
- 5.2 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Headteacher and / or the attendance officer will report to the LA who has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parent/carers.

6. Attendance register

6.1 Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

6.2 The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Education visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity¹
- D = Duel registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

¹ All requests for absence due to a sporting activity must be made via a letter (and signed) by the Club and / or organisation organising the activity.

7. Lateness

- 7.1 Punctuality is of the utmost importance.
- 7.2 The school day starts at 9:00am (although pupils are encouraged to be in school by 8:50am). Pupils should be in their classroom no later than 9am.
- 7.3 Registers must be complete no later than 9:05. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 7.4 After lunch, registers are marked by 13:05. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.

8. Term-time leave

- 8.1 At St. Bernadette's RC primary, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parent/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 8.2 **The Headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.**
- 8.3 Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis.
- 8.4 If parent/carers take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.
- 8.5 A parent/carer requesting a leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least four weeks in advance using appendix 2 of this policy (Please ensure you have read the notes on the back page of the form)
- 8.6 The Headteacher and / or attendance officer may invite parent/carers in to school to discuss the application if there is reason to believe the absence may have a detrimental impact on the child's education
- 8.7 The school will reply to all applications stating whether or not the absence has been agreed and outlining the pupils' current attendance.
- 8.8 If a parent/carer removes their child from school without requesting a leave of absence or without authorisation from the Headteacher, the parent/carer will be informed that a referral is being made to the Local Authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

9. Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence

9.1 The Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice to any parent/carer if:-

- a pupil is absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive;
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has been closed;
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance;

9.2 Consideration will be given to cases where the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed. If, after a warning letter has been issued, there is sufficient irregular attendance to merit a Penalty Notice, it must be issued unless there are exceptional reasons against taking this action.

10. Truancy

10.1 Truancy means any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

10.2 All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 9:00am and 13:00, where the teacher will record the attendance.

10.3 Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must be signed out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

10.4 If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher and / or attendance officer will contact the parent/carer in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

10.5 The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parent/carers of the pupil, stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.

11. Religious observances

- 11.1 The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 11.2 Parent/carers are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

12. Appointments

- 12.1 As far as possible, parent/carers are encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 12.2 If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent/carer.
- 12.3 Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.
- 12.4 If a pupil's attendance is below 96%, proof of appointment may be requested.

13. Young carers

- 13.1 The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 13.2 The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 13.3 The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

14. Performances/activities/sports

- 14.1 Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, are required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).
- 14.2 Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance is required to request a licence from the LA.

- 14.3 Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the Headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.
- 14.4 The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

15. Monitoring and review

- 15.1 The school monitors attendance and punctuality regularly throughout the year.
- 15.2 Leave of absence request forms can be found in **appendix 2** (Please ensure you read the notes on the back page)
- 15.3 This policy is reviewed every three years by the Headteacher and nominated governor/s; the next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2021.
- 15.4 Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parent/carers.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

St. Bernadette's RC Primary school has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. The Headteacher /attendance officer will receive a weekly attendance summary detailing those pupils whose attendance has fallen below (or is at risk of falling below) 96% to date.
2. If parents/carers do not contact the school office on the first day of absence, the school's office staff will contact parent/carers. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the Headteacher/ attendance officer daily. If a reason for absence cannot be obtained, the absence will be considered unauthorised.
3. If a pupil's attendance is at risk of falling below 96%, the Headteacher / attendance officer may seek to discuss this with parent/carers, if necessary.
4. Persistent absence means an attendance of below 90%. If a pupil's attendance is below or at risk of falling below 90%, a letter will be sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and outlining the possible consequences.
5. The pupil's attendance will be monitored for two weeks and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parent/carers will be required to attend a meeting in school with the Headteacher/attendance officer/classroom teacher to set targets for their child. If parent/carers are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local authority attendance officers who will then conduct a home visit.
6. After the two-week monitoring period, and if targets are met, parent/carers will be informed of the improving attendance. Regular monitoring and communication with the parent/carers will continue until attendance stabilises.
7. If targets are not met, the Headteacher / attendance officer will make a referral to the Local Authority.

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REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME (Front pg)

Name of pupil	
Date of birth	
Teacher/year group	
Child's Address	
Contact Numbers	

I request permission for my child to be absent from school between: -	
First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Total School Days	
Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the Head teacher to consider (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).	

Declaration (Please read the notes on the back of this form)

I have read and understood the information about leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and Penalty Notices in the school's Attendance Policy (published on the school's website and available via the school office). I am aware of the possible consequences should my child take a leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Head teacher.

Name (Print) **Signature**..... **Date**.....
 (Parent/carer)

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REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME (Back pg)

Important information for Parent/carers

Parents are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure their child attends school regularly. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason. There is no automatic right to take a child out of school during term time but the law does allow Head teachers to consider individual requests to authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

However, the Head teacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact.

The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made at least 2 weeks in advance and the Head teacher may contact the parent/carer to discuss the request before a decision is made. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised, the expectation is that child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior to and after the date covered by the request.

If the request for a leave of absence is refused and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Head teacher *may* refer the matter to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice *may be* issued.

A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.

Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.