

5th September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

The importance of School Attendance at Balshaw's Church of England High School

I hope this letter finds you and your families well after the summer holidays. I am writing as we start a new academic year to emphasise the critical role parents play in ensuring the regular attendance of their children at school. The Department for Education's Attendance strategy called 'Working Together to improve School Attendance' was implemented on August 19th 2024. It highlights the priority placed on excellent school attendance by both the government and schools. At Balshaw's, we are unwavering in our commitment to providing every child with the right to education. As parents, your fundamental role in ensuring your child attends school consistently and punctually cannot be overstated. Our Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson has written to all schools on the topic of Attendance at school and outlined her views and that of the Government on school attendance:

"We all must recognise the shared responsibilities of schools, government and families (for school attendance). Places of learning should be centres of communities. That's why face-to-face attendance is so important. High levels of absence harm the children who come to school as well as those who stay at home. It disrupts the rhythm of the classroom and makes building a sense of belonging so much harder.

"The first week of term is crucial in setting the right behaviours for attendance. Parents have a responsibility to send their children to school, and schools have a responsibility to create welcoming, engaging and inclusive spaces for pupils. The Government's approach to absence is 'support first' – spotting attendance issues early and working with families to help children back into school. "

Education is the cornerstone of our students' development into successful young adults. We are dedicated to working collaboratively with our families and offering support to overcome any potential barriers to your child's learning, education and ultimately their overall success as a young person. However, this requires open and honest communication from parents. Working in partnership with Lancashire County Council, we monitor the attendance of every child in school daily. If a pupil is late or absent, parents/carers will be contacted as part of our Attendance and Safeguarding procedures.

It is important to note that we cannot authorise any leave requests during the school term, as this hinders the continuity of your child's education, we would also like to highlight that children obtain over 12 weeks holiday per year to enable family holidays and other family commitments to take place.

Regular attendance is not just a legal requirement, but it is vital for students to maximise their learning and achieve their full potential. There are several important steps that you can take to ensure your child maintains a high level of attendance:

- Ensure your child attends every day, on time, equipped and ready to learn. Form Tutor time begins at 8.40am and all students need to be at the school gates on Church Road by 8.30am.
- Ensure the school has up-to-date addresses and telephone numbers. We will contact you by text, Synergy message, email or by telephone if your child is absent and you have not contacted the school.
- If your child is too ill to attend school, please contact school on attendance @balshaws.org.uk, send a Synergy message or telephone us on 01772 421009 and provide an explanatory note on their return to the school. Please make sure you telephone the school every day your child is absent with an estimated return date.
- If no contact is received regarding the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Ensure that medical appointments are made outside of school time wherever possible. Please provide evidence for these such as an appointment card or Surgery text message or appointment card.
- Avoid trivial absences such as, 'buying new shoes' or birthdays. This would not be accepted as a reasonable absence.
- Holidays should not be taken in school time and they will not be authorised during term time.
- Respond to school letters or telephone calls regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Contact your child's Form Tutor, Head of House or the Pastoral Team if you are having trouble in getting your child into the school and we will support you to help resolve any issues.

As we start this new academic year there are lots of exciting learning opportunities ahead for students. These can only be maximised by your child being in school each day on time and ready to learn. From the first day of term to the last, the small moments in a school day make a real difference to your child. Research on School Attendance and Absence conducted by the Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel De Souza in 2022 shows **that attending the first week of the school term is a strong indicator that a child will go on to attend school regularly throughout the term.** Effectively from day 1 of our new term your child has the potential to achieve 100% attendance for the school year but they have to be here every day.

May I take this opportunity to thank you as parents/carers for your understanding and commitment to the education and well-being of your child by working with us to help him/her achieve success by being in school every day.

Yours sincerely



Mr S. Haycocks

Headteacher

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

