



Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy

## Student Attendance Policy

*'But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere'*

*James 3:17*

**FORTITER ET FIDELITER**

*Bravely and Faithfully*

This document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher, and Governing Body of the Academy. No amendments can be made without their express instruction and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

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**Review date: September 2024**

**Date of next review: June 2025**

**Reviewed by: A Duckworth**

**Approved by FGB September 2024**

## **THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

Bishop Rawstorne is a Christian community that delights in seeking wisdom and knowledge, building relationships and character based upon the Word of God, enabling us all to flourish bravely and faithfully.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT IN OUR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

Our aim is to ensure that you feel happy, safe and secure in your school.

### ***We believe:***

- that every individual in our community is a unique and valuable creation made in the image of God.
- we all have a right to be considered equal, worthy of respect and esteem.
- we all have a responsibility to treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves.

## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy seeks to encourage excellent attendance from all students by offering an environment in which they feel welcomed, secure, and valued both for themselves and as part of the school community. School seeks to ensure that all students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for all to fulfil their true potential. Bishop Rawstorne's attendance target is 97% and this is a target for all students that we are committed to.

The school will comply with the latest Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (2006) to improve the attendance of all students at school, and will:

- reduce the number of students who fall into the category of persistent absence (PA 90% or below)
- promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school and provide advice/support/guidance as appropriate to improve student's attendance.
- continue to develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- promote effective partnerships with other services and agencies whenever needed.
- recognise the needs of the individual student when planning re-integration following significant periods of absence.
- identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of both regular and punctual attendance.

The school procedures will include guidance on:

- registration
- what constitutes unauthorised absence
- consistent use of symbols for authorised absence
- leave granted under very exceptional circumstances
- systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for individual students.
- systems for dealing with absence

- systems for reintegrating students who have been absent
- systems for monitoring whole school attendance
- appropriate alternative curricular arrangements

### **Leave In Term Time**

Any leave in term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Parent/guardians must request permission for the leave **before** the absence. Requests cannot be agreed retrospectively. **Leave must be requested a minimum of 5 days before the leave is desired.**

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect his/her schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help their children and the school by not allowing their child to be absent in school time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time and all applications for leave must be made in advance by the parent of residence using the Google forms link on the school website. Requests will only be authorised if the circumstances surrounding the requests are considered to be exceptional and these requests will be authorised by the Headteacher.

In considering any request we will look at various factors such as:

- the timing of the request;
- when a student is just starting school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- students should not be absent, (where possible), (both) immediately before and during assessment periods.
- when a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- where a student's attendance rate is already below 97% or will fall on or below that level as a result of taking leave.
- other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

Bishop Rawstone reserves the right to unauthorise any absence previously authorised where attendance falls below 97% furthermore, absence should not be requested for any student whose attendance is below 90%.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or justifiable. If school has followed its attendance procedures and a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, the school may see seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team or request legal interventions from the School Attendance Legal Team. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily.
- Pupils who arrive at school after the register has closed and without a legitimate reason (see section 4.2).
- Days off for shopping, birthdays or looking after other children.
- Day trips and other leave in term time which have not been agreed by the head teacher.

- Days that exceed an amount of leave agreed by the head teacher.

It is the head teacher's responsibility to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised and, if there is any uncertainty relating to an absence, school may request further confirmation from parents before an absence is authorised. For absence due to illness, this may be in the form of:

- Sight of an appointment for your GP or for the hospital, clinic, etc.
- Sight of prescribed medication or prescription for medication.
- Sight of medical notes/records.
- A letter from a medical professional such as a specialist or consultant.

Parents should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a school, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

Whenever we are unable to authorise an absence and the request is for 5 days or more, we will notify the local authority who will in turn issue a formal written warning of the process of how taking an unauthorised period of absence can lead to a penalty notice. The Penalty Notice will only be pursued if you choose to ignore the decision made by school. It is important that parents understand that leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless a circumstance surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.

- The monetary cost of the penalty notice is £160 (reduced rate £80 if paid within 21 days).
- If a second holiday is taken that year or within the next academic year, there is no reduced payment option – the fine will be issued at £160.
- If a third holiday is taken within a 3-year period, the case will go straight to prosecution.

### **This is a process that cannot be appealed**

The circumstances where penalty notices may be used include:

- unauthorised absence (including parentally condoned absence)
- truancy
- persistent late arrival at school
- unauthorised leave in term time
- delayed return from authorised leave

In every case a student must have had a minimum of 5 school days/10 sessions unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 week school period.

In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the student does not return to school on the agreed date. Re-admission cannot be guaranteed.

### **The school day**

Students are expected to be in school by 8.55am. The morning register closes at 9.30am and the afternoon register closes at 2pm. Students arriving after these times will receive a U mark

(unauthorised absence), apart from students who have had a medical appointment where confirmation has been received by the Attendance Officer, these will be recorded as 'Late' and are counted as statistically present.

## **Punctuality**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting important news and information for the day. Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. **Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.**

If your child is often late you will be asked to meet with a member of the pastoral support team, or the attendance lead to discuss ways to improve punctuality, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed may result in further action, as outlined below, under section 5.

## **Attendance recording**

Attendance registers will be marked as laid out in the most recent DFE documentation DFE AUGUST 2024 Guidance (this is now a quick link).

## **Support to encourage good attendance**

Bishop Rawstone is willing to work with students and parents who need additional support in relation to normal, full time school attendance. We can accommodate phased returns after periods of illness, early and late starts and finishes or time out of school when pressure may be having an adverse impact on a student's mental or physical health and wellbeing. Everything that is discussed or considered will be tailored to the needs of the student although it should be clear that any alternative strategies should have a clear short-term end point being aimed for.

Students that are suffering from anxiety, and have medical supporting documentation to this effect can be supported in school under many of the EBSA strategies.

If parents feel that a part time timetable is appropriate then this has to be formally agreed using local authority guidance. The names of students on part time timetable have to be relayed to the local authority and the agreement of a phased return/part time timetable is that students must grow the time in school week on week always working towards full time education.

Part time timetable MUST be reviewed with a student's Head of Year week on week and should minimise virtual engagement focussing on face to face education. They must also show a regular increase of time in school.

Bishop Rawstone does not support prolonged part time education – in line with local authority guidelines unless recommended by medical professional, in writing at consultant level.

## **Partnership Working**

The school will work with support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school.

## **Monitoring, Analysis, Action Planning**

The school will adopt systems for monitoring attendance at both individual student and whole-school level. Letters will be sent advising of attendance and persistent absence and if necessary absences will be unauthorised which may lead to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.

## **Review of Whole School Attendance Policy**

The Trustees will review this policy and the associated procedures annually.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

The law requires parents or guardians to ensure their child receives efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

All parties have a role to play.

Parents/Guardians will:

- ensure their children attend school and are punctual.
- encourage and support their children to attend school and be punctual.
- avoid any absences in term time.
- provide notes of explanation, copies of medical appointment cards for all appointments and all medical evidence for any period of absence.
- ensure sufficient prior notice is given requesting leave for exceptional circumstances.
- alert the school if they become aware of attendance problems.
- attend attendance meetings if concerns are identified.
- participate in Attendance Parenting Contracts, where appropriate.
- support the school in agreed interventions/action plans.
- expect contact if their child is absent and a message has not been received by 9.30am.
- expect frequent contact during periods of absence.

Students will:

- attend school.
- recognise behaviour needed (for example early bedtimes) to allow regular and punctual attendance.
- arrive punctually for registration.
- follow the signing in procedures for late registration.

School staff will:

- contribute to the promotion of raising the percentage attendance within school and reduction in the school's persistence absence figures.
- be advised by the Senior Leaders who monitor attendance and have overall responsibility for ensuring that the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance. They will take a lead in ensuring that attendance has a high profile within the school, and ensures that Heads of Year and designated support staff have adequate time to discharge the day-to-day responsibilities.

Designated staff will:

- continue to promote the importance of full attendance and to share attendance data and attendance targets.
- continue to train Group Tutors in the correct marking of attendance registers.
- continue to train all associate teachers in the correct marking of attendance registers.
- seek absence notes and/or medical evidence from students following a period of absence.
- check and amend absence codes.
- review and identify trends of absence.
- collate attendance data.
- analyse attendance data.
- contact the 'first point of contact' of absentees who have not notified school by 9.30am.
- monitor and record attendance of students who are educated elsewhere.
- implement re-integration programmes.
- contact parents regarding concerns by telephone and/or standard letter sent.
- involve the Senior Leadership Team if matters remain unresolved.
- arrange meetings with parents/guardians and draw up contracts for completion by all parties concerned.
- communicate and update all staff about attendance matters and school systems.
- ensure arrangements are in place in case of the absence of a Group Tutor.
- liaise with support agencies.
- submit attendance data to the CSA and the Systems Manager.

All staff will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere for students.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum.
- provide sympathetic responses to any students' concerns.
- be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance.
- ensure that attendance is seen as important for all students.
- assume responsibility to promote and monitor student attendance, despite the designated responsibilities.
- participate in training regarding school systems and procedures.

### **Governors**

- Ensure compliance with The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually or more frequently if required.
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, instigate a review of school's attendance procedures.
- Authorise the head teacher (or other designated person) to make decisions regarding leave of absence requests.
- Work with the head teacher in establishing equitable and consistent criteria against which leave requests will be considered.

### **School Attendance Support Team**

Each school has a named contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can advise schools on attendance related matters, and with whom Targeting Support Meetings will be held. For mainstream nursery, primary and secondary schools this will be a School Attendance Support Worker (SASW); for special schools, short stay schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) this will be a School Attendance Consultant (SAC).

### **School Attendance Legal Team (SALT)**

Following requests from schools for legal interventions when parents fail to ensure their children attend regularly, the School Attendance Legal Team undertakes enforcement processes, including penalty notices, prosecutions, parenting orders, education supervision orders and school attendance orders.

### **Children Missing Education (CME) Team**

The Children Missing Education Team ensures the local authority fulfils its statutory duty to identify children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. For further information see section 7, below, regarding notifications schools must submit.

### **Procedures**

Registration:

- the school has a statutory duty to record student attendance twice a day and the registration periods are 8.55am – 9.00am and 1:45 – 2pm. An entry will be made on the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll.
- At the end of the school term, where we have an early finish, afternoon registration will take place at 12:45pm. and students will be registered at this point before Period 4 at 1pm. The day will still consist of 2 sessions, AM and PM.
- for late registration, students must sign in at the main office.
- for signing out, the students and parents must sign out at the main office.
- telephone messages from parents are written on a slip, by the administrative colleague who took the call.
- only the Attendance Officer under the direction of a member of the Senior Leadership Team is allowed to amend absence codes.
- attendance of dual registered and guest students is monitored.
- attendance of students taking part in school activities at registration time e.g. music tuition is monitored by the Group Tutor.
- some absence codes, namely O and H, are to be used only with the approval of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Heads of Year in the school will monitor students after any period of absence.

Decisions about no longer authorising absence will be made by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Strategies for Promoting/Improving Attendance**

School will:



- promote the need for excellent attendance with parents by regular reminders in the newsletter.
- following up absences with a sequence of letters and other procedures until the matter is resolved.
- reward good attendance, with points and special certificates and prizes presented at Achievement Assemblies and on a termly basis in tutor groups.
- regularly monitor the attendance of vulnerable groups of students.
- engage in spot checks.
- emphasise the importance of good attendance at transition from Key Stage 2.
- implement the “first day contact” system.
- promote anti-bullying and provide support to any student in respect of bullying.
- consider curriculum delivery and differentiated learning as a possible impact on attendance.
- engage in the managed transfer process in collaboration with local schools.
- research the use of associate teachers as learning mentors, and use senior staff in the involvement of mentoring underachievers.
- offer Pastoral Support Programmes to support reintegration following exclusion, medical absence (extended) and non-attendance/truancy.
- use lesson registration for Health and Safety reasons and action by the Heads of Year in respect of post-registration absence.
- agree individual student targets for attendance as appropriate.
- identify training for staff involved in the implementation of these strategies.
- Key staff are EBSA trained and where appropriate, and designated appropriate by a medical practitioner, will follow EBSA guidelines and strategies.

### **Parenting Contracts - Attendance**

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2002 makes provision for the use of Parenting Contracts where attendance is a cause for concern.

The school might ask parents to enter into a Parenting Contract when levels of lateness (after register is closed) and / or levels of absence become a cause for concern. This contract will identify the roles and responsibilities of parents/guardians, the school and the student for a mutually agreed period after which a review will be held.

There will be appropriate rewards/acknowledgement where contracts have proved successful and sanctions where contracts have been unsuccessful.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

The school will seek to adopt a range of strategies and will work in partnership with parents/guardians to promote excellent attendance and address poor attendance. Where such measures do not have the intended outcome, the Senior Leadership Team reserves the right to pursue legal proceedings, including the issuing of a fixed penalty notice, where a student has an unacceptable level of absence.

### **Removal from Roll**

Schools are legally required to advise the Local Authority about the details of all children admitted to and removed from the roll of their school. No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the school and the Attendance Service. Bishop Rawstorne Academy will be

guided by the Local Authority in accordance with the criteria set out in Regulation 9 of the Education (Learner Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended 1997 and 2001).

It is important that the school has clear arrangements for identifying such students.

The procedures include the following:

- Senior Leadership Team, the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance and the Heads of Year are responsible for identifying students who may have gone missing.
- Senior Leadership Team, the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance and Heads of Year are responsible for promptly referring such students.
- the systems manager is responsible for completing the Common Transfer Form under the s2s system once a student has been traced elsewhere.
- advice will be sought before a student can be removed from roll when their whereabouts cannot be established.
- the Headteacher, after consultation with senior colleagues, is responsible for deciding whether a student can in fact be removed from roll.

### **School Based Systems for Dealing with Lateness**

- The system for late registration – students must sign in at the main office.
- The Group Tutor the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance and the Heads of Year are responsible for working with students regarding punctuality.
- The Group Tutor the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance and the Heads of Year are responsible for working with parents regarding punctuality.
- Support will be offered to students by the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care and the Heads of Year.
- Lateness will be monitored daily and at the very least acted on, on a half termly basis with sanctions being enforced for regular offenders
- Standard letters are available for the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care and their Heads of Year to use to promote punctuality.
- Sanctions range from monitoring sheet, to report card, to student regularly reporting to the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care or the Heads of Year.
- Parenting Contracts will be considered and implemented as necessary to intervene in the persistent lateness of their children.
- Penalty Notices will be considered and implemented to intervene in the persistent lateness of their children.

### **School Based Systems for Dealing with Absences**

- System of 'first day contact'.
- Letters of concern to parents/guardians.
- Inviting parents into school for discussion.
- Home visits where appropriate – where absence is being questioned
- Strategies for family support, including the use of Parenting Contracts where appropriate.
- Further school based action with more senior staff involved.

### **Monitoring, Analysis, Evaluation and Action Planning**

The school has identified the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care and the Heads of Year as the people with specific responsibility for monitoring the whole school and year group attendance respectively, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's procedures:

- the office staff collect the data.
- data is collected and disseminated to relevant staff weekly (each Monday).
- feedback re analysis of attendance data will be provided to:
  - Governors – by the Headteacher.
  - Staff – by the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance or the Heads of Year at a Group Tutor Meeting.
  - Students – by the Assistant Headteacher - Attendance or the Heads of Year during a termly assembly.

The analysis might identify specific issues for the various audiences:

- patterns of broken weeks by individual students.
- patterns of absence for individual students.
- misuse or inconsistent use of absence codes across the school.
- trends in reasons for absence
  - extended medical leave
  - granted leave in exceptional circumstances
  - exclusions, etc.
- trends in particular groups (ethnic groups, gender), forms or years.