

St Barnabas Church of England Primary Academy
ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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1.Aims

Improving school attendance is a key priority at St Barnabas Church of England Primary Academy. There is a strong link between absence and attainment. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and frequently missing lessons will negatively impact on a child's learning – whereas good attendance and punctuality will increase the chances of a child achieving their full potential in school.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

At St Barnabas we will:

- work with children and their families to ensure each child attends school regularly and punctually
- acknowledge the efforts of children and parents who work to ensure good attendance and punctuality
- challenge the behaviour of those children and parents who give low priority to regular attendance and good punctuality
- maintain an effective and efficient system of communication with children, parents and appropriate agencies to assist in improving attendance and punctuality
- maintain an effective and efficient system of gathering, monitoring and analysing attendance related data
- continue to ensure that good attendance and punctuality is a priority for all children, parents, staff and governors.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Achieving good attendance and punctuality is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and staff.

School have a responsibility to:

- keep an attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions
- inform the Local Authority and Trust of pupils who are persistently absent, have a high level of unauthorised absences or who have been absent for longer than 2 weeks without reason
- work collaboratively with parents, children, governors and other agencies to promote good attendance and punctuality

3.1 The local governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis.
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Issuing letters, arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.3 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They are expected to report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher/ DSL on My Concern.

3.4 Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- They also contact parents if a child has failed to attend school and a reason hasn't been given.

3.5 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.55am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Absences for any reason other than illness may be recorded as unauthorised. This is decided by the Headteacher as per Government regulations and guidance. Medical appointments should be made outside of school hours wherever possible. If school is not given a reason for an absence, this will be recorded as unauthorised. Persistent unauthorised absences may lead to penalty notices being issued to parents or, in some circumstances, prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

When children are late for school or are collected early from school, parents must inform the office by 8.55am stating the reason and this will be recorded on our school system.

Parents must request permission in advance for any family holidays during term using the school's discretionary leave of absence form. The Headteacher will consider all applications as per the Government and Local Authority Policy and have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If the Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. A request form is available from the school office and the school website. This must be completed BEFORE the holiday is booked. Holidays will not be authorised retrospectively.

Parents are reminded that an education penalty notice can be issued for any unauthorised holidays taken without school permission.

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Late
- Unauthorised absence
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will close at 9.25am. Children who enter the classroom after 8.55am will be marked as late in the register and after 9.25am, when the register closes, as unauthorised. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.55am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff or leaving a message on the school absence answer machine (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school will ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and shows evidence of appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- After 8.55am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed at 9.25am will be marked as absent, using the appropriate U code

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit or contact the police if there are safeguarding concerns.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Children missing from education

All children are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has a legal duty to identify those children of compulsory school age who are not registered at school, and who are not receiving education otherwise than at school, and to take steps to ensure that suitable arrangements are put in place.

If our school has any concerns that a child may be, or is at risk of becoming, missing from education, we contact the LA. cme@blackburn.gov.uk

4.7 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly contact parents about their child's attendance and absence levels if there are concerns. There are also end of term amazing attendance awards for children over 96% and end of year reports detail attendance data.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family members bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- Funeral of immediate family member
- Religious observance

- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer)
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family members graduation ceremony/passing out parade
- Medical appointments (parents/carers should be encouraged to arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours when possible). If the medical appointment is during the school day, evidence must be provided. Schools should not authorise a whole days absence for a medical appointment that occurs in the morning – the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via our school website or school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each week class 'amazing attendance' winners in both the infants and juniors will receive an extra fun games session on the MUGA.

At the end of each half term, the class with the best attendance will receive a class reward such as a cinema afternoon, disco, non-uniform day etc.

Each term pupils with amazing attendance above 96% are awarded a certificate in Celebration Worship.

The school may also reward pupils whose attendance or punctuality has greatly improved.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1: Procedures

Daily

- Unusual or repetitive absences (e.g. repeated odd days off for medical appts, absence due to not having shoes/uniform etc) should be discussed with the Headteacher/DSL and reported on my concern.
- The names of any children without a reason for absence are referred to office staff to contact parents.
- Persistent absentees are noted by the office staff, as are families who cannot repeatedly be contacted regarding absences.
- Staff should notify the Headteacher/DSL and report on my concern if they become concerned about a child's attendance.

Termly

- The Headteacher will monitor attendance regularly during each term across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- The headteacher will identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- All children with attendance under 96% are monitored and under 90% reasons for absence are investigated by the Headteacher.
- Children with attendance under 90% are "persistent absentees" and will be targeted to improve their attendance. Parents will be contacted and invited to attend an attendance planning meeting in school.
- The parents of children who are repeatedly late will be contacted and targets set to improve punctuality.
- Children who show patterns of absenteeism, e.g. regularly off on Fridays, are also noted and monitored. Reasons for these absences will be investigated and parents will be contacted.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families where there are concerns around attendance
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
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Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Collection at the end of the school day

School ends at 3.30pm and children should be collected promptly at this time. Parents have a duty to inform school if they are running late or if someone other than themselves is collecting their child. Children will remain in class until 3.35pm after which time they will be taken to the school office.

It is important that school know if pupils are to be collected by a parent, another responsible adult or are to make their own way home. If these circumstances change it is important that school is kept informed.

It is vital that school have up to date phone numbers for parents and that mobile phones are switched on during school hours.

If a child is not collected at the end of the school day or activity and parents/carers cannot be contacted, arrangements will be made to take the child to a place of safety. Children's Social Care will also be contacted. This follows the Blackburn with Darwen agreed "Protocol for safeguarding children not collected from school at the end of the school day or school activity."

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