

# St Bede's Newsletter

Welcome to St Bede's...



## Attendance Week 18

Y1	Y1/2	Y2	Y3	Y3/4	Y4	Y5	Y5/6	Y6
94.4	93.75	95.33	86.21	95.67	100	95.16	97.83	97.6

## **This week...**

**Mon 18<sup>th</sup> to Friday  
22<sup>nd</sup> May**

Walk to School Week

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May**

All About Anxiety  
Workshop

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

Break up for half term

## **Coming soon...**

**Tue 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

Reception 2026 New  
Starters Parent  
Meeting 3.30pm

**Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> June**

- Y6 Residential  
Final Meeting  
3.15pm
- Y6 Transition  
Workshops
- Snappy Opera  
Rehearsal (in  
school)

**Thur 4<sup>th</sup> June**

Festival of Choirs  
4.30pm at Carmel

You can view our latest curriculum Newsletters on our website

# Our Safeguarding Focus This Week...

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about **SCHOOL AVOIDANCE**

School avoidance refers to reduced attendance or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. In 2022-23, more than one in five children in England were found to be absent from school over 10% of the time. This guide focuses on school avoidance with an emotional basis, offering expert mental health advice. However, it's important to remember that school avoidance is a hugely subjective experience which requires a tailored, individual approach.

### UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

#### REASONS FOR ABSENCE

School avoidance is sometimes underpinned by several factors rather than one single cause. This could include something going on for the child or young person within the family or at school. A child may have caring responsibilities at home, for instance, or a change in family dynamics; bullying and friendship difficulties at school; pressure to achieve in schoolwork and exams; or moving from primary school to secondary school.

#### PATTERNS OF ABSENCE

You may notice patterns in regular absences or children regularly expressing that they don't want to attend school (particularly being reluctant to leave home on school days). If a child or young person is neurodiverse, there is some evidence to suggest there are more aspects of school life which can cause distress – such as changes in the environment, changes of routine and sensory stimuli.

#### COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. These could include tummy aches, headaches, or saying they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with the GP first to rule out medical causes or illness.

### IMPACT OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

#### LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school on a regular basis not only supports academic attainment but is also important for the development of key life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

#### LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be far reaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. It may, for example, lead to reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

#### CYCLE OF ABSENCE

Consistent absences may contribute to sustained school avoidance over time. Further to this, the longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that there is a rise in their ongoing need to avoid the activity making them anxious – increasing their desire to stay at home.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

#### WORK TOGETHER

If there's a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it's important that there is clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so you can take a child-centred approach together towards a plan of support or reintegration. This ensures a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for the child.

#### MANAGE OVERWHELMING FEELINGS

Acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss coping strategies together to help them manage difficulties. These could include mindfulness, deep breathing or going for a walk. This helps them understand that you are working together towards a common goal, and that these strategies can be used when bigger feelings arise.

#### FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES

Children can benefit from a regular and consistent routine. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, packing their bag and leaving the house. A consistent evening routine which is calm and spent away from screens can also give children much needed predictability and familiarity. Schools can help create a timetabled routine for the child's school day, if required.

#### RECOGNISE POSITIVE STEPS

Drawing attention to a child's successes – be they big or small – can help to give them some much-needed confidence and motivation. Celebrate these daily victories – such as getting out of bed on time or completing school work – and don't hesitate to let the child know when you're impressed or proud of them. Such an approach can go a long way.

#### Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: [nationalcollege.com/guides/school-avoidance](https://nationalcollege.com/guides/school-avoidance)

Keep up to date with upcoming events via our school calendar

<https://stbedesdarlington.bhcet.org.uk/calendar>



# Y6 SATs

Year 6 celebrated the end of SATs with a water fight and slip & slide, followed by some refreshing ice lollies. Despite the cold weather, spirits were high and they even managed to completely soak Miss Howard!



# Parent Survey

We were delighted to receive so many kind and encouraging comments in our recent parent survey. Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their views—your feedback truly means a lot to us.

Some highlights included

The curriculum and how the school teaches is brilliant and I try and share this at parent consultation

During a difficult time with family issues the school gave full support and protection

I really like that the teacher emails me with progress reports

EYFS is such a lovely environment and my little boy has enjoyed his early years experience

I can not speak any higher of Mrs cuff and all her staff

I have been hugely impressed with St Bede's so far...the day to day activities are both fun and educational

We also value constructive feedback that helps us continue to raise standards across all areas of school life. One parent shared the following suggestion:

I feel the football kits could do with updating, as they currently do not reflect the otherwise high standards of the school. Perhaps fundraising involving the children could help raise money for new kits

We appreciate this thoughtful comment and agree that our sports kit should reflect the pride and standards of our school. We are currently exploring options to update the football kits and are considering ways to involve pupils in fundraising activities to support this