



St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

'Doing our best for God'

24th January 2024

Dear Parents/Carer,

As you know, here at St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, we have very high expectations of all our children in relation to their attendance and punctuality at school. We are supported in this by Blackpool's Pupil Welfare Service who monitor the attendance of all our children on a regular basis.

The government states that any child whose attendance falls to 95% or less, to be classed as being 'at risk of Persistent Absence.' Pupils with 90% or less are classed as 'persistent absence' children. Regardless of reason for an absence, a child who misses 19 days in any school year is regarded as being 'persistently absent.'

School Attendance is central to raising standards; missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Research shows children with poor attendance achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Illnesses and appointments

We do not expect parents to bring their child into school if they are too ill to attend. Please inform school of the specific reason of the absence i.e. Sore throat, cough etc. This can be either on the absent telephone line or email school on admin@st-bernadette.blackpool.sch.uk so we can record this on your child's attendance records with the correct code. This in line with our request for the usual medical evidence for appointments. Advice is available from the NHS:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/626669cb8fa8f523b7221b98/UKHSA-should-I-keep-my-child-off-school-guidance-A3-poster.pdf>

We ask that if your child has an appointment for dental, hospital, GP etc. it be made outside of school hours where possible. If unavoidable, please bring the appointment card in to school, or send a photoshot of the text appointment notification, this will enable us to evidence of your child's medical appointments on their attendance records. Repeated absences of illness may require the school to ask that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery or local pharmacy as recommend by the government.

Holidays during term time

We would ask that you consider carefully when choosing your holiday dates as being out of school does affect your child's learning and their attendance records.

At present, we do not fine parents if their child is absent due to taking holidays during term time, as do some other Blackpool schools.



Devonshire Road, Bispham, Blackpool FY2 0AJ

Tel: 01253 353461

Email: admin@stbernadette.blackpool.sch.uk

Web: <https://st-bernadette.blackpool.sch.uk>

Head Teacher: Mrs Alexis Satterthwaite



It has been suggested, by the Local Authority, that we should consider issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised holidays in term time, if our attendance continues to decline/impacted due to holidays been taken.

The government is considering making all schools in England fine for parents for holidays taken during term time. Please note schools do not benefit from any of the money received from fines collected.

Actions

If your child's attendance drops below 90%, your child could be put on the Fast-Track initiative, or another suitable initiative by the Local Authority. Your child's attendance will be monitored for a minimum 12-week period and no absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is provided, if attendance improves, no further action will be taken. Parents/Carers may be invited to an attendance meeting to explore any concerns they may have and identify any support needed. **However, we pride ourselves on excellent parent/school partnership so we would hope to have had much conversation and support before we reach the stage where the Local Authority would need to intervene.**

As well as children attending school regularly, we also expect children to come to school on time. Classroom doors are open from 8.50 am until 9am. After which, you will have to take your child to the main office where they will need to be signed in. Children do not like arriving late and often report feeling embarrassed or anxious. It is also very distracting for the other children in their class when they have already started lessons. Punctuality will be very closely monitored, and we will work with parents to identify any concerns and look at what support, if any is needed. Persistent lateness is poor attendance and if your child arrives after the register closes at 9 am this impacts their attendance.

To succeed, school, parents and pupils need to work in partnership - we are always here to support you.

Thanking you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Alexis Satterthwaite

Mrs. Satterthwaite
Head Teacher.

Olivia Dowling

Mrs. Dowling
Family Support Worker/SENDCo