

St. Paul's Catholic Primary School

Part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust



Growing in God's Love to Be the Best We Can Be

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Named personnel with designated responsibility for Attendance:

Academic year	Head teacher	Deputy Head	Attendance Officer	Chair of Governors
2023-4	E Lomax	R Cook	G Davison	Mrs F Sinclair

Approved by: Governors

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Committee

The governing committee is responsible for:

- 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

2.2 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

2.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- 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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr R Cook and can be contacted via telephone: 01665 602547 or email via admin@stpaulsalnwick.co.uk

2.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher.
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mr R Cook and can be contacted via telephone: 01665 602547 or email via admin@stpaulsalnwick.co.uk

2.5 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 by 9.00am via SIMS and again by 1.10pm via SIMS.

2.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Listen to messages recorded on the school absence line and record reasons for absence on school system.
- Send out absence text messages and follow up with telephone calls if parent does not respond by 9.30am.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance if required.

2.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence if illness does not dictate a no return period ie: no return within 48 hours of last bout of sickness, 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

2.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

3. Recording attendance

3.1 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 at 8.45am and once at 1.00pm. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- 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 8.45am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by emailing, calling the school or leaving a message on the school absence line (see also section 7).

Phone: 01665 602547 – Option 1 – Absence Line

Phone: 01665 602547 – Speak to admin from 8.30am

Email: admin@stpaulsalnwick.co.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or you have already been asked to provide medical evidence for absence.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may 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. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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.

3.3 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.

Parents should contact the school office to notify of appointments and share documentation such as medical letter, appointment card etc.

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. Leave of absence forms can be requested via the school office. Parents can email admin@stpaulsalnwick.co.uk and the form will be sent or they can ask in person. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
 - Parents will be asked to explain reason for late arrival.
 - When a child has been late on three occasions within a four week period parents will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher where school will offer support eg: early morning phone call, referral to Early Help, monitoring system.
 - Six unauthorized absences will result in referral to EWO.

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Text message sent asking for parent to contact school re: absence.
- 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 Headteacher may visit the home or contact the police.
- 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

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through half termly letters using a traffic light system. School buy into the A Star Attendance system which monitors attendance.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 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'. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 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:

- Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member. Authorised absence would only be for the funeral service and travelling time, not for extended leave.
- Absences to attend a parents' own wedding if the headteacher is satisfied there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time.
- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the future that will coincide with school holidays.
- Reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND may result in a leave being granted as an exceptional circumstance, not a repeated occurrence.
- Absence recommended by a health professional, in writing, as part of a parent or child's recovery from a trauma or crises.
- Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above will be discussed with the EWO.

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 admin@stpaulsalnwick.co.uk or requested in person at the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

4.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address

4.3 Legal sanctions

The school or 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 a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

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.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Half termly reward for class with highest attendance across a term.
- Weekly attendance winners receive an extra break time the following week.
- Certificates/badges for 100% attendance per term as incentive to strive to improve attendance
- Prize draw for those with 100% attendance termly

6. Attendance monitoring

- Our primary school ensures consistent attendance monitoring through monthly meetings with the LA EWO.
- Early intervention letters are sent in September requiring medical evidence for all absences due to the previous year's attendance being 90% or below.
- Initial concern letters detailing the effect absence has on learning are sent as soon as attendance drops below 93%
- This is followed by request for medical evidence.
- A parent contract is signed after three unauthorised absences to try and avoid referral to EWO.
- School utilises FFT Aspire and A Star Attendance weekly to monitor trends and act swiftly when necessary.
- Incentives complement our strategy, creating a positive attendance culture and reinforcing our commitment to maintaining high attendance levels in the school.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

Use online systems of FFT Aspire and A Star Attendance to monitor trends on a weekly basis and act swiftly when required.

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly through use of FFT Aspire, SIMs and A Star Attendance 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

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, governors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 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 (and/or local authority) 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
- Provide incentives to pupils to improve their individual attendance
- Provide incentives to pupils and classes who achieve 100% across a week, term or year.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once a year by Headteacher, Mrs E Lomax and Deputy Headteacher, Mr R Cook. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

10. 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

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where mental health issue is affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)

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

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