Attendance Policy

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: Autumn Term 2022
Last reviewed on:	Autumn Term 2022	
Next review due by:	Autumn Term 2023	

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1. Aims

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

> Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds 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

> Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

> Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> 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

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

3.3 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Ruth Cooper and can be contacted via ruth.cooper@wigan.gov.uk

3.4 Mrs. Karen Heapy (SBM) and Mrs. Lisa Speakman (Pastoral Manager)

> 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.

> Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families (Pastoral Manager)

3.5 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.

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends everyday on time

> Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am 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

3.7 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
- 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 keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must 'round up' on the playground and gates locked by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open for 30 minutes after the start of the morning session.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents can phone the school, email the school or notify via the School APP reporting absence facility.

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

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.

Children Missing In Education:

In order to prevent children from becoming Missing from Education, the school is legally required to notify the local authority of all children removed from our registers outside of the normal transfer dates, whatever the reason. Parents are requested to provide the school with all the necessary information and fill out a transfer form with the new address, new school etc. Any information the school holds will be passed on to the new school and relevant local authorities as required.

4.3 Planned absence

If parents or students have concerns about attendance they should speak to the school office in the first instance.

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.

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 be authorised.

4.4 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

4.5 Following up absence (See Appendix 2- Attendance Flow Chart)

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

> Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer THE SAME DAY to ascertain the reason, by phone call.

> Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting Attendance

Each term a monitoring report is produced and shared with the school leadership team and the Governors as part of the Headteacher report.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly written reports and RAG rated traffic light letters.

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance annually in the written end-of-year report.

We will also:

> give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters

> celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements on Class Dojo / Facebook page

> Reward good or improving attendance

> A weekly attendance trophy is presented to the class with the highest attendance with a reward.

> A half termly award for the class with the 'best attendance'.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;

- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.

- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";

- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. Evidence would be required in each case.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> 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

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent 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 following systems are in place for addressing attendance:

> Each half term an attendance tracker is produced showing every child's percentage attendance. This attendance data is used to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
> The Headteacher, School Business Manager and Pastoral Manager look at children's attendance under 97% with a particular focus on those under 90% (the figure classed as persistent absence).
> RAG rated letters are sent home
> Parents are contacted either by letter or phone informing them that their child's attendance and/or punctuality is low
> 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. Minutes are taken from that meeting

The purpose of these meetings are to:
- Make parents aware of their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Ensure parents are aware that a referral to Early Help may be necessary if there are a significant number of unauthorised absences.
- Discuss reasons for absence.
- Look at additional support that may be available, eg. Family Support, School Nurse.
- Look at strategies for promoting good attendance, eg. Reward charts.
- Raise awareness of the impact of good attendance on pupil outcomes.
- Ensure that parents understand the impact and possible consequences of further absence.

- Create Individual Action Plan in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families.
- Monitor the impact of any intervention, making adjustments if necessary and using findings to inform future strategy. Where interventions fail to address attendance

issues, identify the reasons why and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention.

- Parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day. If the Individualised Action Plan does not improve attendance, then a referral can be made to Early Help.

- Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority. Local Authority Attendance Specialists work with schools, families and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution in the Magistrates Court, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

Individual high attendance or significantly improved attendance is also acknowledged.

At the end of each term, children whose attendance is 100% are presented with a certificate in assembly. At the end of the school year children whose attendance is 100% are presented with a special certificate in assembly.

5.3 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.

6. Attendance monitoring

The school will set attendance targets each year. Our schools targets are: 97% Attendance.

> We will analyse attendance and absence data regularly (daily/half termly/termly/annually) 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.

> We identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teacher 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.

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. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher and the Governing Body. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. 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

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

Appendix 2: Attendance Flow Chart

Attendance Flow Chart

1/2 termly tracking / monitoring with SLT and attendance officer

No contact made 1. Check holiday form or telephone log
2. Office to contact parent 9:30am

Contact made: parent/carer ring school or notify via APP

Concerns / Vulnerable child—SLT/DSL contact

Enter into SIMS—track

No answer from contact

Leave voice mail and try all other contacts list. Repeat.

Enter into SIMS—track

Still no answer from contact—Vulnerable and <90% (PA)

At this point vulnerable / PA children will have been invited in for a meeting—offer of support alongside an attendance plan. Close daily monitoring with SLT and attendance officer.

Home visit in pairs

Enter into SIMS—track

No answer from home visit

Invite into school for meeting and create attendance plan

Explore sources of support

1. Letter through the door (letter headed paper)
2. Phone police—welfare check

Enter into SIMS—track

Early Help

Enforcement Attendance Team

(contact Attendance Office—Ruth Cooper)

2nd Day

? Prosecution

1. Home visit in pairs
2. Letter through the door (letter headed paper)
2. Ring 101

Enter into SIMS—track

Social Care

Police

Startwell

CME (Child Missing in Education) policy with attendance officer