

St Bernard's Primary School

Attendance Policy



St Bernard's Primary School
Approved by Governors: February 2022
Review date: Spring 2024

St Bernard's R.C. Primary School

Attendance Policy

To grow, learn and love following Jesus

1. Introduction and background

St Bernard's R.C. Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Ofsted will consider attendance carefully.

2. Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters.
- Report to parents/carers annually on how their child's attendance is with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's attendance target.
- Celebrate and reward good or improving attendance with certificates and prizes.

3. Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which are prohibited in accordance with Government guidelines.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Truancy before or during the school day.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the cause.

4. School Monitoring Procedures

- The Head of School and Pastoral Support Coach will scrutinise registers (through Arbor) to investigate any patterns in attendance and punctuality.
- See [attendance management system](#) for detailed steps through this process.
- Attendance patterns for groups of pupils will be considered each half term. Any groups that may be vulnerable due to poor attendance will be identified swiftly and actions put in place.

5. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils with less than 90% attendance are tracked and monitored carefully.

6. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.20 am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call.
- Or they can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Text or telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Head of School, Pastoral Support Coach, if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 80%.

7. The Education Welfare Officer

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 and problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

8. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect our infant children to be at their classroom door before this time. Junior children are able to come into school from 8.45am. Work will be prepared for them as they come into school.

Registers are taken by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in class by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head of School to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

9. Holidays in Term Time

As of 1st September 2013, there is **no** entitlement in law to time off during school time to go on holiday. In accordance with Government legislation and guidelines schools must issue a fixed penalty Notice.

We **cannot** agree to leave during term time under any circumstances:

10. Targets

The minimum level of attendance for any child at St Bernard's R.C. Primary School is 90% attendance. We have a whole school aspirational target of 96%. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress.

Our target is to achieve better than this, however, because we know that excellent attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

11. People responsible for this policy and its implementation

Head of School and the Governing Body.

12. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote Excellent attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy was reviewed by:

Julie Le Feuvre- Head of School
Di Bowles- Pastoral support