



Attendance Policy

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.” (School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. Department for Education, November 2016)

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to clearly outline the responsibilities of parents/carers and of the school in ensuring that all children at St Bartholomew's CE Primary School have full access to the whole of the curriculum by means of regular and punctual school attendance.

Why is attendance important?

Ultimately, attendance is directly linked to attainment; if your child misses school or arrives late, they will miss out on valuable learning time and this will affect their progress. We endeavour to work with parents/carers and with children in helping improve and sustain regular attendance to give our children the education they deserve. See Appendix A.

Principles of school attendance

- Regular and punctual school attendance is essential in ensuring your child has full and inclusive access to the education to which they are entitled.
- All children should be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.
- The school needs the full support and co-operation of parents/carers to achieve its aims. We monitor all absences and lateness regularly and parents will be contacted when attendance slips significantly, whether authorised or not.
- Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. We believe that most problems with regular attendance are best worked out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance or punctuality, or are struggling to get your child to school, please communicate these concerns to us and we will do our best to help you and your child to improve their attendance.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

The government expects parents to 'perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.' (School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. Department for Education, November 2016)

Good Attendance

It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their child has good attendance at school. Good attendance at our school is 96%.



Punctuality

Parents/carers are required to make sure that their child arrives at school before registration at 8.55am. The playground is supervised from 8.45am. Any child arriving late in school must report to the school office with the adult who has brought them to school. The parent/carer should provide the reason for lateness. If a parent/carer knows in advance that the child will be late, it is helpful if the school can be informed.

Illness

If a child is unable to attend school because of illness, parents must inform the school by telephone on 01273 692463 before 10am. This must be done on the first day of absence and every subsequent day. If no reason is provided on the day of your child's absence, this will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. An unauthorised day's absence from school is the equivalent to 2 unauthorised sessions (sessions are AM and PM). If your child has six unauthorised sessions (three full days' absence) then you will be referred to the local authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

We understand that all children have periods of illness from time to time, and in this case, it is best to keep them at home to rest and recover. Please use the traffic light system (below) as a guide to help you to decide when to send your child to school and when to keep them at home. Medicines can be given at school, as long as the appropriate medicine form has been completed and the dosage is on the packaging. **Please note that if your child is physically sick or has diarrhoea, they must not return to school for 48 hours.**

COME TO SCHOOL

Cough or cold

Sore throat

Feeling tired

Mild tummy ache

We will always contact you if your child becomes ill during the school day.

TAKE ADVICE

Headaches. A child with a minor headache does not usually need to be kept off school.

If the headache is more severe and is accompanied by other symptoms such as a raised temperature or drowsiness, keep your child at home and consult your GP.

STAY AT HOME

Raised temperature
Over 37.5°

Rashes can be the first sign of infectious illnesses. If your child has a rash, please check with your GP before sending them to school.

Vomiting and diarrhoea. Children can return to school 48 hours after symptoms have subsided.

Medical appointments

Wherever possible, medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours. If your child has an appointment during school hours, they must still attend school on the day and we must receive a written note confirming the appointment in order to authorise this absence. Medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours. Medical appointments count as an absence. If medical appointments cannot be made outside school hours, children are expected to attend school on the day of an appointment unless they are too unwell or the appointment is for the whole day.



Sibling/parental illness

Please be aware that in the case of sibling or parental illness, your child must still attend school. All reasons for absences are recorded and the school will contact you if we are concerned that the illness of a parent/carer or sibling is preventing your child from attending school regularly or punctually.

Holidays during term time

Holiday will **not** be authorised during term time in accordance with local and national guidelines. Please note that where an unauthorised absence has been taken for the purpose of a holiday, the school will ask the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine). Any absence during term-time is strongly discouraged and will only be authorised in 'exceptional and unavoidable circumstances'. You can meet with the headteacher before you book your holiday, if you feel that there are exceptional circumstances that mean you can only take holiday in term time - please book an appointment through the school office. You will be asked to provide evidence of the exceptional circumstances.

Please note that absence following the denial of a request will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This is deemed to be truancy, as it is parentally condoned absence without the school's permission. In this instance, it is the school's responsibility to report this to the Local Authority. The Local Authority may then issue you with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Other absences

If there is a genuine reason why a child cannot attend school then please contact the school and the Headteacher will decide if it is possible to authorise this absence. In cases of family emergencies, it is important (wherever possible), that children still maintain a regular routine of attending school. We endeavour to provide a safe, affirming place for all children, and will endeavour support your child through times of difficulty at home. Birthdays are not a genuine reason for absence - children are allowed to wear non-school uniform at school if it is their birthday.

If a reason is given for absence is not genuine and the school has evidence to the contrary, this will also be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Absence Procedures

Parents are expected to telephone the school office (**01273 692463**) at the start of the first morning of the absence. It is essential that you contact the school. When a child has not been registered as present, and no notification has been received, a member of the Office Team will text and then telephone parents/carers to establish the whereabouts of the child. This is done for safeguarding reasons.

Absences caused by the child's genuine illness will be classified as authorised absences. The nature of the illness will need to be provided so that school can monitor illness patterns, especially for contagious illnesses. The school may ask for medical evidence. If the school are not informed of the nature of the illness, the absence will not be authorised.

Telephone numbers

We need at least two up to date contact numbers for each child. Please help us to help you and your child/ren by making sure we always have an up to date number. In case of an emergency, we need to be able to contact someone (parent/carer, other family member, family friend) straightaway to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child.



Responsibilities of the school

The government expects schools to “ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.” (School attendance Departmental advice, November 2016)

The Law

The law requires that all schools record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools are required to follow up on any absences to establish a reason for the absence and to ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken.

Attendance monitoring and tracking

The Office Team are responsible for regularly monitoring attendance for all pupils, and will meet regularly with the Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher to discuss children whose attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern. Good attendance is 96% or above. Please see the flowchart (appendix B) for full details of our attendance tracking procedure.

Promoting good attendance

We have a number of rewards available for children who attend school regularly and punctually. This is both to reinforce the importance of good school attendance and to help children to get in to a pattern of regular attendance that will set them up for secondary school.

Children at St. Bartholomew's who maintain good school attendance can earn the following rewards:

- 100% attendance for the whole year – special prize and certificate.
- 98%+ attendance for the whole year – prize and certificate.
- 100% attendance for a half term – exciting attendance award.
- Each week, the classes with 96% attendance or above will receive 10 class points.

Attendance Support Meetings

If your child's attendance is a cause for concern, you may be invited to an Attendance Support Meeting with the Headteacher. The meeting is an opportunity to discuss ways the school can help and possible referral to other agencies, e.g. the school nurse or the Access to Education Service (formerly the Education Welfare Service). At these meetings parents/carers may also be set targets as part of an attendance plan.

Safeguarding/Child Protection

All absences from school will be investigated. If there are concerns that a child may be at risk, referrals will be made to Social Services in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Persistent Absence (PA)

Schools are required to “promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.” (School attendance Departmental advice, November 2016)

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. This results in significant loss of learning. Children whose attendance is at this level will not be achieving their potential. We need the fullest support and co-operation of parents and carers to tackle this. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.



PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully as we recognise that absence directly affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: the allocation of additional support through a Mentor, Teaching Assistant or Partnership Family Support Worker, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

Illness/partial absence

If a child becomes ill at school, the school is responsible for administering first aid and/or deciding if the child is too unwell to remain in school. Whenever a child is taken out of school for any reason during the day, the adult who collects him/her must first report to the office. Please note, if your child is physically sick at school, they must not return to school for 48 hours.

Next Steps

Parents and carers are encouraged to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the case will be referred to the Local Authority's Access to Education Officer. AEOs can use sanctions such as fixed penalty notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment. Full details can be obtained from the Access to Education Service.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Ms K Blood (Headteacher)
Miss F Keeling (Deputy Headteacher)
Miss A Charlton (Attendance Co-ordinator)

Overall responsibility for attendance lies with the Governing Body.

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the school Governors.

Date Ratified: February 2018

Review Date: July 2020 (unless there are statutory or local updates)



Appendix A

365 days in each year		175 non school days a year						175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments					
		190 School days in each year		10 days absence 180 days of education		19 days absence 171 days of education		29 days absence Half a term missed 161 days of education		38 days absence 152 days of education		47 days absence 143 days of education	
		100%		95%		90%		85%		80%		75%	
		GOOD Best chance of success Gets your child off to a flying start		WORRYING Less chance of success Makes it harder to progress				SERIOUS CONCERN Not fair on your child Court action					



Appendix B

