

Attendance policy

The Bishops' C of E Learning Academy



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1. Aims

All schools in TLAT aim to meet their 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.

The Bishops' C of E Learning Academy actively encourage regular attendance by providing rich curriculum activities. Children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and may lead to educational disadvantage.

Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school. It is the school's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

Pupils attend for 190 days each year – a total of 38 weeks

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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

The register is a legal document and all pupils must be on this document. All schools must, (except those where all pupils are boarders) under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.

The Register 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance so it is also important that parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time for registration and are collected promptly.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Contact should be made by phone call to the school office, and detail the reasons for absence.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence only if evidence of the appointment is presented to the school; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

In the event of a medical or dental appointment taking place during school hours an absence form must be completed prior to the appointment. These forms are available from the school office.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

It is important that children arrive for school punctually to ensure a calm and purposeful start to the day.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The attendance officer or a member of the School's Administration Team will phone the child's parents by 10 O'clock to establish the reason for the absence.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/Carers are informed of their child's attendance record via the annual written report.

Where attendance drops below expectations letters are sent to advise of current attendance.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays. Head teachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. Leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused. Where a family **chooses** to take a holiday during term time or where a family states the child is unwell but it transpires a term time holiday was taken the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code). If leave of absence is **taken without the request having been agreed**, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absence purely for the purpose of a **family holiday is not an exceptional circumstance**. Exceptional circumstances could include:

1. 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 near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. 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.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

Attendance is monitored daily by the Attendance officer. The Headteacher oversees the monitoring process and meets regularly with the Attendance Officer.

Any issues identified concerning absence, illness or lateness will be addressed by the Attendance Officer by letter, telephone or meeting with strategies put in place to improve attendance.

The Attendance Officer will endeavour to work with pupils and families to address attendance issues and may refer a pupil to the Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Lead and/or Education Welfare Service where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

Flexi Schooling

Schools in TLAT will not normally consider requests for flexi schooling. (see appendix 2)

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools may refer to the Local Authority to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

In accordance with the [Cornwall Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence from school](#) (£120 per parent, per child / £60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions (5 days) or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

The academy will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority’s code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- a 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We reward good attendance through giving out certificates during our sharing assemblies. We also celebrate the class with the best weekly attendance for the week, by giving them a trophy to keep in their

classroom. Whole class weekly attendance is displayed on the classroom door or window so that parents can see it when they drop off or pick up their child.

We are planning to recognise and reward 100% attendance with regular cinema trips. In addition to this all those with 100% attendance for the current week will have the opportunity to be entered into a draw to take home a DVD and popcorn to share with their family over the weekend.

The school works with parents to support regular attendance – for example, communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, indicating a named contact in school, etc.

6. Attendance monitoring

TLAT school's monitors pupil absence on a **daily** basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill, unless otherwise agreed with the school.

If a pupil's absence goes above **5** days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with Local Governance and the Board of Trustees of TLAT.

7. Communications

At the induction meetings for children about to join the school, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. At this initial meeting parents are asked to arrange their family holidays within school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted. The school's policy relating to authorisation of holidays is also communicated to parents.

When children join our school at other times of the year, the importance of regular attendance is discussed with parents.

This initial communication is considered as the first stages of the warning process to any family who are considering taking their children out of school during the school term.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 Governance

The Board of Trustees

- is responsible for reviewing and ensuring the policy is implemented.

The Local Advisory 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.

8.2 The Headteacher

- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the head teacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the head teacher when pupil absence crosses thresholds that require action. (see attached thresholds and letters to send to support attendance and provide information to parents)

8.4 Class teachers/Form tutors

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

8.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding 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

Flexi Schooling guidance

TLAT do not normally grant requests for Flexi Schooling.

In exceptional circumstances a decision may be made that flexi schooling best meets the educational needs of a pupil registered at TLAT. In these circumstances, the arrangement will be monitored on a fortnightly basis. Before flexi schooling will be agreed TLAT will need to be assured about the safeguarding and quality of the alternative provision. The following information should be provided as part of your request for flexi schooling .

1. Details of the proposed alternative provider
2. Letter of assurance that organisation adhere to Keeping Children Safe in Education
3. Copy of public liability insurance
4. Qualifications of Staff
5. DBS number of staff
6. Details of pupil ratio's
7. Lesson Plans
8. Confirmation of attendance

