

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Attendance Policy



The Mission for St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is

“to ensure a happy and secure learning environment where we celebrate the dignity and worth of all in our school community.

As a Christian community we recognise that in loving others we love Jesus and so help each other to reach our full potential.”

Therefore the implementation of our Attendance Policy plays an important part in enabling us to strive towards achieving this mission for all the children in our care.

Aims

At St Bernadette's we:

- promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school;
- set targets to improve individual pupil and whole school attendance levels..

Rights and Responsibilities

Attendance and punctuality is a priority for all parties associated with St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School. The Rights and Responsibilities of each party are set out below:-

Parents should:

- Ensure children attend school regularly and punctually.
- Contact school by telephone on the **first day of absence**.

- Keep school informed, on a regular basis, of continued absence.
- On a child's return to school send a letter explaining the reason for absence.
- Avoid holidays in term time.
- If however absence from school can only be taken during term time they can only be authorised for **exceptional circumstances**. A form is available from the school office to be completed and submitted for consideration before the commencement of the absence.
- Make school aware of any problems, not necessarily due to illness as to why their child does not want to come into school.

Use of Penalty Notices

We may request that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence and/or persistent lateness. This includes Leave of Absence which is taken without a prior request being made. We may also request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice for days taken in excess of the agreed period of leave without good reason.

Please note that the government threshold for issuing a penalty notice is 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a term or ten days (20 sessions) over two consecutive terms. Penalty Notices are currently £120 or if paid within 21 days the cost is £60.

Persistent Absence

The minimum attendance level which is expected of all primary aged pupils nationally is 95%. It is when attendance falls below this level that school will consider whether it is appropriate to offer support in order to improve the situation. Both local and central government pay particular attention to reducing the number of pupils who fall into the persistent absence category (PA). A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when their attendance falls below 90% at any point during the school year; whether the absences are authorised or unauthorised. When attendance nears this level children miss significant amounts of schooling; meaning that their educational progress is put at risk. We need parents full support in ensuring that attendance does not reach this level. However, if for any reason a child's attendance does fall into this category parents will be asked to do all they can improve the situation.

Families will be supported in this via school's robust systems for managing PA. This support may involve the need for parents, and children of an appropriate age, to agree to a parenting contract. Due to the seriousness of PA status it is highly likely that such cases will be referred to a local authority attendance team (Pupil Attendance Support Team). Furthermore, absence data for individual pupils who are classed as persistent absentees are reported to the Department for Education annually; along with whole school absence figures.

Pupils should:

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school e.g. early to bed at night to allow punctual attendance.
- Attend school/registration punctually.
- If late, advise their teacher and school secretary so that the register can be marked accordingly.

All Staff should:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance.
- Be aware of the part all staff can play in ensuring attendance is seen as important for all pupils.
- See pupils' attendance as the responsibility of all staff, even if the co-ordination and management of attendance are designated responsibilities of specified staff.
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures.

Headteacher should:

The overall responsibility for pupil attendance lies with the Headteacher who will:

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school e.g. regular mentions of pupil attendance on newsletter, issuing 100% attendance certificates on a termly basis, see also school prospectus.
- Ensure a register is taken twice a day, at the beginning of the morning and after lunch.
- Accurately record and monitor attendance in and absenteeism from data recorded in registers.
- Include a statement in the school prospectus regarding the importance of school attendance and stressing the strong link between attendance and educational attainment. This message to be reiterated on the Home-School Agreement and in school newsletters on regular basis.
- Headteacher to analyse attendance data.

Governors should:

- Adopt and review the School Attendance Policy on a regular basis.
- Be involved in attendance meetings as appropriate.

PROCEDURES

Registration

- Morning registration is from 8.55 am to 9.10 am.
- Afternoon registration is from 12.55 pm to 1.00 pm.
- If a pupil arrives after the close of registration, they should inform the school secretary in order that the appropriate register can be marked accordingly.
- If a child should need to leave school early for whatever reason, they are required to inform the school secretary so that this can be noted in the class register.
- Recorded information from register transferred on a weekly basis onto the electronic registration system by the school secretary.
- Should a parent contact school to inform of their child's absence, this must be noted in the appropriate class register and the class teacher informed.
- When a pupil who has been absent from school returns, it is necessary for them to bring to their teacher a letter from their parents, explaining the reason for their absence. This is then filed in the school office.
- Pupils who are late (ie after 9.10am) must sign a Late Book.
- Visitors must sign in and out of school and wear a Visitor badge.
- Parents of pupils and members of staff who call in as absent must be recorded in the absence book.

Partnership Working

At St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School we will work with the Attendance Support Officer and Consultant and other support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school.

Review of Whole School Attendance Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

The attendance at St Bernadette's is very good and we strive to maintain this.

Appointments at the doctor, dentist, hospital and clinic should be made, if possible, for outside school hours. If this is not possible a letter notifying school in advance, is requested.

Parents/guardians are asked to notify the school immediately if their child is to be absent, for whatever reason. When the child returns a letter will be required explaining the absence.

We would also appreciate a note for unavoidable lateness, for not taking part in PE lessons and for leaving school during school hours. Pupils may not leave school during school hours unless accompanied by a parent/guardian or a recognised representative of the parent/guardian.

If a child's lateness is a cause for concern then a letter will be sent to parents to alert them to this and invite them to discuss strategies to improve punctuality. A copy of this will be kept by the headteacher in the headteacher's attendance folder.

If a child's attendance is a cause for concern (eg below 90%) then a letter will be sent to parents to alert them to this and invite them to discuss strategies to improve attendance. A copy of this will be kept by the headteacher in the headteacher's attendance folder.

Requests for permission to take children out of school during term time will only be granted **in exceptional circumstances**. Parents must request permission in writing from the Headteacher who has been delegated by the Governors to deal with any such requests. Requests made retrospectively will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

It is particularly important that children in Year 6 who will be taking SATs during May are not unnecessarily absent.