

St. Bartholomew's
Church of England
Primary School



Policy for Attendance
October 2022

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 body

The governing body is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding 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
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › 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
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 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 before 9:05am.

3.5 School office staff

School office staff will:

- › 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 and designated senior leader in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher

3.6 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends school, on time, every school day
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the 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, on time, every day.

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

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:20am.

4.2 Unplanned absence

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

When phoning the main office, a menu option is dedicated to leave pupil absence messages. Email to the school office address is also acceptable.

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 or carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card/ekail 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 or carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent or carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents and 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 or 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 authorise.

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

Any ongoing punctuality issues will be followed up with parents and carers by phone call, letter and then a conversation with senior staff.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- › Call the pupil's parent or carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. All appropriate methods to contact the pupil's emergency contacts will be made.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- › Call the parent or carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving Children's Services.

4.6 Reporting to parents and carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. Termly letters will be sent home and any concerns will be raised directly with those families.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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 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. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is promoted directly to parents in regular communications. High attendance is celebrated in termly and annual assemblies, with certificates being presented to the children. This is done sensitively so that pupils who have had unavoidable absences are also included.

7. Attendance monitoring

Office staff monitor pupils who are absent without reasons. These names are passed on to the Headteacher and senior leaders for follow-up and investigation. Records of concerns are recorded on CPOMS. Half-termly analysis of attendance triggers letters, emails and phone calls to families with low pupil attendance.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 body.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers 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

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe 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 school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. 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. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- › Child protection and safeguarding policy
- › Behaviour policy

Flow Chart of Attendance Monitoring and Escalation

