



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Reviewed: October 2021

Next Review October 2022

Overview

Pupils need to attend school regularly to fully benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less well than children who have regular attendance. At St Stephen & All Martyrs' CofE School we believe that good attendance and punctuality are important in helping children achieve the best that they can be. Children should be in school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Expectations

The government have laid down guidelines which they expect children to achieve in terms of attendance; **this is set at 95%**. It is the expectation of the school that all children will achieve at least 95% attendance. There is a variety of reasons for children missing school. Some are unavoidable, but we would ask that you support us in ensuring that your child's attendance meets both the school and the government's expectations. We will closely monitor your child's attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue. The school undertakes a wide range of measures to support children whose attendance at school is an issue. Where there may be an issue and we fail to see an improvement, it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the child and their family receive the support required to bring about an improvement.

EXCELLENT	Your child's attendance is above 98%. As well as being an excellent attender your child will achieve the best results for their ability.
GOOD	Your child's attendance is 96-97%. Your child will almost certainly achieve the best results for their ability.
SATISFACTORY	Your child's attendance is 95%. Your child is likely to achieve the best results for their ability.
UNSATISFACTORY	Your child's attendance is 90-94%. They are below the national government threshold of 95%. Your child will miss up to 18 days each school year and this will make it difficult for them to achieve their best. A letter will be sent home to alert you about your child's attendance and school will offer support if needed.
CONCERN	Your child's attendance is 85-90% Your child will be put on an attendance action plan. School may arrange for your child to be assessed by the senior school nurse. You could face a fixed penalty fine or further legal prosecution if your child's attendance does not improve. Your child is missing so much time from school that their results will be suffering and they will be finding it difficult to keep in touch with lessons or work.
SERIOUS CONCERN	Your child's attendance is below 85% You could face a fixed penalty fine or further legal prosecution if your child's attendance does not improve. Your child is missing so much time from school that it will be almost impossible for them to keep in touch with lessons or work.

Daily Procedures

The school gates open in the morning at 8.40 and close at 8.50.

At the end of the school day the gates will open at 3.15 – to allow KS1 children to be collected at 3.20.

It is legally required to register children twice daily. Registers are marked in the morning between 8.50 and 9.00 am and in the afternoon at 1.00pm in KS1 and 1.20pm in KS2.

Children are encouraged to come into school at 8.40am and proceed to their classroom – where morning learning activities await them. However, school officially starts at 8.50am when all children should be in their classrooms in order for registration to take place. Not only does this process allow us to monitor attendance, but also it acts as a check list in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill.

Each year a school calendar is sent out and is also on the school website. This clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school.

Absence from school

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers. Under the 1996 Education Act, parents commit an offence if the child does not attend school regularly. If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone. If no message is received your child's absence will be unauthorised. We will however make every effort to contact you. It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses.

Once contact has been made with the parent, the school will determine if the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Medical appointments

If a child has an appointment during school time you will need to show proof of attendance from the doctor's/dentist's surgery or hospital in the form of a letter or stamped appointment card. If the appointment is in the afternoon and proof of your appointment has not yet been obtained, this will need to be shown to the office the following morning. If proof of attendance cannot be shown the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance so a decision can be made whether to authorise the absence or not.

Safeguarding

The school reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns. In addition if the school suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the Head Teacher/ Deputy Head Teacher reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agency.

Children Missing From Education

When a child goes missing from school, the school will follow the "Identifying and maintaining contact with children missing or at risk of going missing from education 2013". The school will make reasonable enquiries into the location of pupils with 10 days continuous unauthorised absence. The Head Teacher will report the child missing to the Early Intervention Team. This may be investigated further by Children's Services and appropriate interventions will be taken at that level i.e. - referral to police.

The school will seek advice from the local authority if a pupil fails to return from an extended family holiday during term time and the school and local authority have made reasonable enquiries but cannot locate the pupil. As a result the school may remove the pupil from roll.

Leave of Absence in term time

Schools can no longer authorise family holidays in term time.

If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time we advise parents to complete a 'Leave of absence' form available from the office on request. The Head Teacher may grant leave of absence for 'exceptional circumstances' this will be 1 or 2 days at the maximum. A form will need to be filled in for **ANY** reason for a child being off; including funerals, weddings and religious observance.

Penalty Fine

Under DFE guidelines, the Governors may consider taking legal action against a parent/s whose child takes leave of absence without the Headteacher's permission and apply for a penalty notice fine(£60- £120) to be issued by the court section or other legal proceedings by the Local Authority. The £60 Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full separately by both parents within 21 days and will rise to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Failure to pay this penalty notice may result in prosecution.

The above will also apply to parents if their child has 10 unauthorised absences (equivalent to five days) due to any other reason.

Persistent Absenteeism

Children with attendance at or below 90% may fall into the persistent absentee category. This is particularly relevant if any of the child's absences are unauthorised. When a child's attendance falls at or below 90% (at any stage of the year) they will be monitored by school's Learning Mentor, who will track their attendance on a weekly basis. A letter will be sent asking parents/carers to contact the school to arrange a meeting with the Learning Mentor to discuss the attendance concerns and to devise an Attendance Action Plan (appendix1) to secure an improvement in attendance. The child's attendance will be monitored for a four week period. It will be expected that the child attends school **every day** during this period. **If the child is absent from school during this monitoring period parents will be expected to provide medical evidence**(i.e. - medical appointment cards, copy of prescription, letters concerning hospital appointments, letters from professional organisations, doctor's medical certificate). If there continues to be no improvement in attendance and absences remain unauthorised the school will issue a penalty notice fine. At this stage school may also make a referral to the Early Intervention Team.

Children with attendance at or below 85% will be asked to attend a meeting with the School Nurse, accompanied by their parent/carer.

Punctuality

The 1996 Education Act requires that every student should attend school and be on time. It is better to be late than not to be in school at all, **BUT** when students arrive late it makes it difficult for everyone. The teacher has to stop and wait for the latecomer to settle down, the rest of the class is disrupted and the latecomer misses the, often vital, first part of the lesson.

Children who arrive after registration must be signed in by a **parent/carer** at the main office. If a child arrives at school on their own, a text will be made to the parent/carer to confirm why their child was late for school. It is important to note that any child who arrives at school after 9.10am

may be marked with a 'U' in the register. This means that despite being in school they will technically be marked absent from school for the morning session. It will be recorded on the register as an unauthorised absence and will be used as 1 of the 10 unauthorised sessions that could result in a £60-£120 Fixed Penalty Notice issued to both parents.

If you are aware your child will be arriving late or leaving school early, please contact the school by telephone.

Home time

Children should be picked up promptly at the end of the school day; any children who are not collected on time will have their names recorded .**If a child is left until 3.45pm they will be moved into FABBS in the school hall. The charge for this will be £6.50 per session. The fees will be paid directly to FABBS.** If any child is not collected by 4.00pm, without contact from a parent to give a valid reason, a call to Social Services will be logged.

Rewards and Incentives

Children are rewarded for excellent attendance in many different ways. Class attendance is monitored weekly and classes who achieve 100% attendance will be rewarded with being able to engage in 15minutes extra play on the following Monday.

Class attendance figures will be placed on display on classroom doors for the previous week – in order to raise the profile of attendance. During Friday's Celebration assembly the weeks attendance figures are shared and the top three classes are place on the attendance rocket display. These scores are collated over the term –and the class with the most placings are rewarded with a suitable treat i.e short film, extra play, pop-corn party.

Children who have 100% attendance & punctuality in a week – will be awarded a 'Chance card' – this will go into a raffle box every Friday as they enter celebration assembly. At the end of the summer term this will be drawn and the winner will receive a bike and helmet of their choice.

Children who achieve 98% attendance or higher at the end of each term will be awarded a certificate in Celebration Assembly.

Snow Closure

As a school we will only close in the event of snow if we feel it to be necessary to ensure the safety of all members of our school community. If we do close then messages will be posted on the school website and a text will be sent out. You can also find out if school is closed by looking on: the Bolton Council Website:

<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Schoolclosures.aspx>

Outcomes

St Stephen & All Martyrs' will do all it can to ensure that learners come happily, willingly and punctuality to school to ensure that all children gain the greatest possible value from their education.