



### **Legal Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance**

**Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs a child might have.**

### **Parental Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance**

**As attendance is crucial to effective learning and continuity of learning experiences school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.**

**Information on practice and procedures relating to punctuality, illness and absence is available on the school website. At the Induction meeting for parents of Reception children starting school in September the importance of regular attendance and punctuality is discussed. The EWO is invited to the meeting to support this message.**

### **Covid-19 (September 2021)**

**Pupil's attendance is mandatory and the usual rules on attendance apply, including:**

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil**
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence**
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct**

**Although school attendance is mandatory, there are some circumstances where students cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19). To enable consistent recording across all schools, the DfE have a category for non-attendance: 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DfE, the circumstances identified as examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply are listed below:**

- a) Your child has coronavirus symptoms**
- b) Your child has a positive test result for coronavirus**
- c) Your child has to quarantine as a result of travel**
- d) Your child has received medical advice to commence/re-commence shielding**

**School WILL do everything it can to support families at this time and should rest assured that we have followed all government guidelines around infection control.**

**Please see Action Plan for parents on school website which details staggered drop off and collection times.**

**Parents must:**

- **Contact school on first day of absence to provide a reason for non-attendance.**
- **Update the school on the third day of non attendance if the absence is expected to continue.**
- **Parents may be asked to provide medical verification during or following a pupils absence.**
- **Request leave in advance for absences in term time by following the school Leave of Absence policy procedures.**
- **Work with the school and any other agency to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance.**

**School Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance**

**Miss Coughlan is the school attendance leader. As the attendance leader of the school she will ensure:**

- **A whole school approach to reinforce good attendance supporting teaching and learning and achievement of the child's full potential.**
- **Registers are accurately marked and maintained in accordance with the current Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations.**
- **A strict record of attendance is kept, and unexplained absences are investigated by school and as appropriate by the EWO.**
- **Parents are contacted on the first day of a pupil's absence, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer by 10.00am to ensure the safety of the pupil. If no response a letter is posted to the parent/carer on the same day. If there are any concerns then the EWO is contacted.**
- **Individuals or group attendance targets are set and understood by staff, parents and pupils when appropriate.**
- **Raise awareness of the impact of poor attendance on attainment e.g. through open occasions and Induction and Introductory meetings.**
- **Attendance is a standing agenda item at staff meetings.**
- **Attendance is a focus in the termly Headteacher's Report to Governors.**
- **Set an Annual Attendance target with the Governing Body.**
- **Ensure that the school complies with its statutory duty to notify the Local Authority of all pupils' absence from school for 10 days where no explanation for the absence has been provided by the parent/carer.**
- **Ensure that the school complies with its statutory duty to notify the Local Authority of any pupil that has left the school where the pupil destination is unknown prior to removing the pupil's name from the school's admissions and attendance registers.**

**Registration**

**Parents should ensure pupils are in school for 8.55am for morning registration and 1.00pm for afternoon registration.**

**A pupil arriving after 9.00am and/or 1.05pm will be marked late.**

**A pupil arriving after 9.00am and/or 1.05pm on 2 or more occasions in any one week will receive a letter concerning their punctuality.**

**Parents whose child(ren) are persistently arriving after 9.00am and/or 1.05pm on 4 or more occasions over a three week period will be invited into school to discuss their lateness and seek a resolution. Where school action fails to bring about an improvement the matter will be discussed with the Education Welfare Service and consideration given to issuing a Penalty Notice.**

**A pupil arriving after 9.30am and/or 1.30pm will be marked as late after the register closes. This is regarded as an unauthorised absence for the session.**

**The doors to school are closed promptly to ensure the safety of all and late arrivals should report to the Main Reception.**

### **Categorisation of Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

**The parent must provide an explanation for any period of absence from school, it is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.**

**School will usually authorise absences where a pupil is:**

- **Unable to attend school due to illness.**
- **Requires emergency dental/medical appointments. Wherever possible routine dental/medical appointments should be made after school or during school holidays.**
- **Absent due to other exceptional circumstances.**

**School will not authorise absence for:**

- **Shopping**
- **Birthdays**
- **Days out**
- **Looking after brothers/sisters**

**School may request medical verification where a pupil's attendance falls below 90%.**

### **School Systems for Promoting Regular Attendance**

**School will:**

- **Contact parents on the first day of a pupil's absence, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer by 10.00am to ensure the safety of the pupil. If no response a letter is posted to the parent/carer on the same day. If there are any concerns then the EWO is contacted.**
- **Analyse individual attendance pupil data to identify patterns of absence causing concern.**
- **Contact parents by letter to highlight concerns at the beginning of each half term from the Spring term, when pupil's attendance falls below 95%.**
- **Discuss any children causing concern with the EWO on a half termly basis.**

- Invite parents if appropriate to an Attendance Meeting with Head Teacher, Education Welfare Officer, Class Teacher as relevant, where attendance falls below 90%.
- Consider referral to Education Welfare when school action has failed to bring about an improvement in the pupil's attendance.
- Use Individual Attendance Support Plans for pupils with attendance difficulties.
- Use Parenting Contracts where exclusion or behavioural issues are affecting a pupil's attendance in school.
- In partnership with LA use a full range of strategies, including legal interventions, to support improvement to attendance.
- Provide appropriate support to pupils to ensure successful reintegration following long term absence.
- Complete a MAP where complex and significant factors requiring a multi-agency response is identified.
- Implement a range of rewards for pupils with high levels of attendance and those improving attendance.
- Send a letter of congratulations home if a child's attendance is 96% or above at the beginning of each half term from Spring.
- Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school attendance, through parents evenings, pupil reviews and home-school agreements.
- Provide a full and diverse curriculum to engage and motivate pupils, including use of SEAL to promote emotional well-being.
- Make parents aware of the impact of poor attendance on attainment for example through Newsletters and individual letters.

#### **Persistent Absenteeism**

The Education Welfare Service informs us that the government requires every school to provide them with the names of children whose percentage attendance is below 90% at the end of each half term. These names are placed on a persistent absence database. If by the end of the following half term, the child's percentage attendance rises above 90% their name is removed from the database.

We do understand that there may be exceptional circumstances for absence. In line with our Attendance for Learning Policy school will always provide appropriate support to pupils during and following long term absence.

#### **Persons responsible for attendance:**

- Miss Coughlan Head Teacher – attendance leader
- Mrs Faulkner-Designated attendance officer/First day contact link
- Mrs Howard-Governor with special responsibility for attendance

#### **Review of Policy**

- This policy will be formally reviewed every year.
- A copy of this policy is available on the school website and Parents are directed to this as part of the Induction Programme.

- **The principles of this policy will be raised in the school newsletter regularly throughout the year.**
- **Any complaints arising from the implementation of this policy should be addressed to the Head Teacher in the first instance.**

**St. Bede's Catholic Infant School**  
**Leave of Absence Policy**  
**(Adapted from HBC Model Policy)**  
**(See also HBC COVIDAddendum to Attendance Policy)**

**Agreed by Staff** Autumn 2021

**Approved by Governors** Autumn 2021

**Review Date** Autumn 2022

**Signed by Chair of Governors** S. Howard

**Date** 23.11.21

The aim of this policy is to set out the way in which St. Bede's Catholic Infant School monitors and promotes the attendance and punctuality of its pupils. St. Bede's Catholic Infant School is committed to maximising the potential of every child and good attendance and punctuality are essential to this aim. We feel this will be achieved, with the support of parents/carers by ensuring that leave of absence will not be taken in school time, other than in exceptional circumstances. Absence during term time for any reason interrupts the continuity of teaching and learning and disrupts the educational progress of pupils.

## **2. The Law**

From 1st September 2013 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013' amends the '2006 Regulations' and makes clear that Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

## **3. Leave of Absence**

In exceptional circumstances St. Bede's Catholic Infant School will consider a request for leave of absence for one period of absence during the academic year.

## **4. Exceptional Circumstances**

The Head Teacher will determine what are considered to be exceptional circumstances.

The following may be examples of exceptional circumstances:

- To allow a pupil to return to their country of origin for family, religious or cultural reasons.
- Unavoidable circumstances e.g. the parent/carer has inflexible leave allocation and this has been confirmed by the employer.
- A family member is seriously ill.
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family and a leave of absence is deemed appropriate..
- Leave of absence for children of serving members of the Armed Forces.

## **5. Additional Information**

St. Bede's Catholic Infant School will ensure that all parents/carers have access to a copy of this Leave of Absence Policy which forms part of the school attendance policy.

- Parents/carers will be required to complete a leave of absence request form available from the school office and return it to school.
- Parents/carers may be required to attend an interview with the Headteacher to discuss their request for a leave of absence.
- Parents/carers will normally be notified of the outcome of their application for a leave of absence within 10 school days of the date of the application.

If the leave of absence is not agreed by the school, but the pupil is absent on the requested dates, the absence will be recorded as 'G' this will mean that the

**absence has been recorded on the school attendance register as an unauthorised holiday. St. Bede's Catholic Infant School will refer any unauthorised Leave of Absences to the Education Welfare Officer for consideration of a Penalty Notice under local authority protocol which can be found on the Halton's local offer website.**

**Where a pupil is absent from school without permission of the school, the parent/carer of the pupil may be issued with a £60.00 Penalty Notice per parent per child. If the notice remains unpaid after 21 days the penalty increases to £120.00. If the notice remains unpaid after 28 days the Local Authority may commence proceedings under section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act in the Magistrates Court.**

**This policy after consultation with parents/carers and Governors will form part of St. Bede's Catholic Infant school attendance policy.**