

# St Barnabas CE First and Middle School



## Attendance and Truancy Policy

Signed by:

Headteacher

Date: Sept 2020

Chair of Local Academy Board

Date: Sept 2020

Review date: Sept 2021

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- **Statement of intent**

St Barnabas CE First and Middle School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2018) ‘School attendance’
- DfE (2015) ‘Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England’

- DfE (2019) 'Keeping children safe in education'
  - DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- 1.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:
- [Complaints Procedures Policy](#)
  - [Behavioural Policy](#)
  - [Children Missing Education Policy](#)

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The [governing board](#) has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Primary Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of [St Barnabas CE First and Middle School](#).
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's [Complaints Procedures Policy](#).
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2019) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a [Children Missing Education Policy](#) in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

2.2. The [headteacher](#) is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance and Truancy Policy and procedures of the school, and distributing these to parents.

2.3. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Following the Attendance and Truancy Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

2.4. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.

2.5. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

2.6. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

### 3. Definitions

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- **“Absence”** as:
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Not attending school for any reason.
  
- An **“authorised absence”** as:
  - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
  - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
  - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
  - An absence due to a family emergency.
  
- An **“unauthorised absence”** as:
  - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
  - Truancy before or during the school day.
  - Absences which have never been properly explained.
  - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
  - Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
  - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
  - Leaving school for no reason during the day.
  
- **“Persistent absenteeism”** as:
  - Missing **10%** or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.

### 4. Training of staff

- 1.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.
  
- 1.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.

- 1.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

## 5. Pupil expectations

- 1.4. Pupils are expected to attend school every day and will give a verbal agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, [96 percent](#) throughout the year.

## 6. Absence procedures

- 1.5. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence.
- 1.6. Parents are required to send a note in on the first day that their child returns to school with a signed explanation of why they were absent.
- 1.7. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to the [school office](#).
- 1.8. A [phone call](#) will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
- 1.9. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the [attendance officer](#).
- 1.10. If a pupil's attendance drops below [90 percent](#), the [attendance officer](#) will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the parents.
- 1.11. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

## 7. Contact information

- 1.12. Parents are responsible for:
  - Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
  - Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
  - Updating the school if their details change.

## 8. Attendance register

The designated staff members will take the attendance register at [the start of each school day](#) and at the [start of the afternoon session](#). This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Education visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

## 9. Attendance officer

- 1.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the [attendance officer](#) who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parent agreement.
- 1.2. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the [attendance officer](#) has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

## 10. Lateness

- 1.13. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 1.14. The school day starts at [8:55am](#). Pupils should be in their classroom at this time. (soft start and classrooms open 8.45am)
- 1.15. Registers are marked by [8:55am](#). Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 1.16. The register closes at [9:20am](#). Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 1.17. After lunch, registers are marked by [1:15pm](#). Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 1.18. Pupils attending after [9:20am](#) will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

## 11. Term-time leave

- 1.19. At [St Barnabas CE First and Middle School](#), our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 1.20. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 1.21. The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 1.22. The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the [headteacher](#).



1.23. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

1.24. Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

1.25. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.

## 12. Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the **headteacher** – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises.

Parents are required to submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time – this request will be submitted to the **headteacher**.

The **headteacher** will consider the request and will invite the parent in to the school for a discussion regarding any concerns, as well as the timely return of their child at the end of lunchtime and their child's behaviour when not on the school premises.

The **headteacher** reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision within **one week** of the request.

Our lunch time hours are **12:25 - 13:15**. Pupils will leave the school premises within **10 minutes** of the start of lunch and will return no later than **5 minutes** before the end of lunch.

Parents will be required to meet their child at the **school office** when taking them off the premises – the pupil will be signed out and back in.

A member of staff will be available at the **school office** before the pupil leaves the premises and upon their return to sign them back in. No pupil will leave the premises before the member of staff has given their permission.

## 13. Truancy

- 1.1. Truancy means any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
- 1.2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning.
- 1.3. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by **9:00am** and **13:15**, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically.
- 1.4. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.
- 1.5. If truancy is suspected, the **headteacher** is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.
- 1.6. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
  - In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
  - If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
  - A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

## 14. Missing children

- 1.7. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:
  - The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the **headteacher** immediately.
  - The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
  - A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the **headteacher**.
  - The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - **All classrooms**

- [All toilets](#)
  - [Changing rooms](#)
  - [The library](#)
  - [Any outbuildings](#)
  - [The school grounds](#)
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
  - If the pupil has not been found after **10** minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
  - The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
  - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
  - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 1.8. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
  - 1.9. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
  - 1.10. The [headteacher](#) will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
  - 1.11. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
  - 1.12. The [headteacher](#) will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
  - 1.13. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the [Behavioural Policy](#).
  - 1.14. Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence without contact will be handled in accordance with clauses [6.6-6.8](#) of this policy.

- 1.15. A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

## 15. Religious observances

- 1.26. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.

- 1.27. Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

## 16. Appointments

- 1.28. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

- 1.29. Where this is not possible, a note or appointment card will be sent to the [school office](#).

- 1.30. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the [school office](#) by a parent.

- 1.31. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

## 18. Young carers

- 1.32. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.

- 1.33. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.

- 1.34. The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

## 19. Rewarding good attendance

The school acknowledges 100 percent attendance in the following ways:

[Certificate](#)

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:

[Termly individual certificates for 96% or above.](#)

[Termly Class Attendance Cup](#)

[Attendance bravery certificate](#)

School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below [90 percent](#), these privileges may be taken away.

## 20. Monitoring and review

- 1.35. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 1.36. [St Barnabas CE First and Middle School's](#) attendance target is [96 percent](#).
- 1.37. Details of our absence levels can be found on our [website](#).
  - 20.1. This policy is reviewed every [three years](#) by the [headteacher](#); the next scheduled review date for this policy is [September 2020](#).
  - 20.2. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

## Attendance Monitoring Procedures

[St Barnabas CE First and Middle School](#) has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. A spreadsheet is sent to the [SLT](#) and [attendance officer](#) detailing [weekly](#) and [annual](#) attendance to date.
2. Attendance is discussed by classroom teachers and pupils record their attendance in their planners. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the [SLT](#).
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided; these N codes are reported to the [SLT](#) and [attendance officer](#) daily.
4. Contact is made to the parents of any pupils marked using the N code. Any N codes not established after a week are recorded as an unauthorised absence.
5. If a pupil's attendance falls to [96 percent](#), the [attendance officer](#) speaks to the pupil in school to discuss any issues or problems to ascertain how the school can help to improve their attendance. The [attendance officer](#) also makes a phone call home to discuss this with parents, if necessary.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls below [96 percent](#), a letter is sent home raising concerns that their attendance has fallen below the school's expected standard. The letter also has an attached leaflet outlining how parents can work with the school and their child to improve attendance.

7. If a pupil's attendance falls below [90 percent](#), a letter is sent home explaining that the pupil's attendance is now being monitored, and the [attendance officer](#) contacts the parents to discuss this.
8. The pupil's attendance is monitored for [two weeks](#) and, if attendance does not improve after this time, parents are required to attend a meeting in school with the classroom teacher and set targets for their child. If parents are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, a referral may be required to the local education welfare officer (EWO), who will then conduct a home visit.
9. After the [two-week](#) monitoring period, and if targets are met, a letter is sent home from the [SLT](#) to congratulate the pupil and their parents on improving attendance. Monitoring and communication with the parents continues until attendance stabilises to [96 percent](#).
10. If targets are not met, the classroom teacher makes a referral to the EWO. Education welfare protocol is followed, and a parental contract is drawn up. A [four-week](#) monitoring period is established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional [four weeks](#), a fixed-penalty notice is issued.

## **Attendance During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

From September 2020, all pupils are required to attend school. As such, the arrangements set out in the main body of this policy (above) will be adhered to. This appendix has been developed in line with the latest government guidance to set out the additional measures that have been put in place to support pupils' attendance at school.

The school will have due regard for the DfE's '[Recording attendance during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)' guidance when recording attendance during the pandemic.

### **1. Attendance expectations from September**

- 1.1 As of September 2020, attendance is mandatory for all pupils.
- 1.2 From September, the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) apply, including:
  - Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
  - The school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, in line with the procedures in the main body of this policy.
  - The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the LA's code of conduct.

### **2. Shielding or self-isolating pupils**

- 1.1 Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August. This means that pupils who were shielding can return to school, as can pupils who have family members who were shielding.

- 1.2 Pupils who are no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional should discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school. Parents should inform the school of any particular measures that need to be in place to ensure their child can return to school safely.
- 1.3 The school understands that there will be occasions where some pupils may not be able to attend school due to coronavirus, including for the following reasons:
- They are self-isolating and have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus.
  - Rates of coronavirus in the local area have risen and certain individuals are asked to temporarily shield.
- 1.4 Absences relating to pupils following clinical and/or public health advice will not be penalised.
- 1.5 Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, they will be immediately offered access to remote learning, in line with the [Pupil Remote Learning Policy](#).

### **3. Reluctance to return to school**

- 2.1 Parents will be advised to contact the school if they have concerns about their child returning to school.
- 2.2 If a parent raises a concern, a relevant staff member will hold a discussion with the parent to discuss their concerns and provide reassurance on the measures that are in place to reduce risk in the school.

### **4. Monitoring attendance**

- 3.1 The [attendance officer](#) will monitor the school's attendance rates once the school is open to all pupils in September.
- 3.2 Any trends in non-attendance will be identified (e.g. due to anxiety) and measures will be put in place to reengage affected pupils with the school.