

Attendance Policy

St Bartholomew's CE Primary School



Version: V1.0

Prepared by: EP & KM

Valid from date: Spring Term 2024

Valid to date: Spring Term 2026

Approved by: Headteacher

Policy Updates	
Version Number	Changes
1.0	New Policy

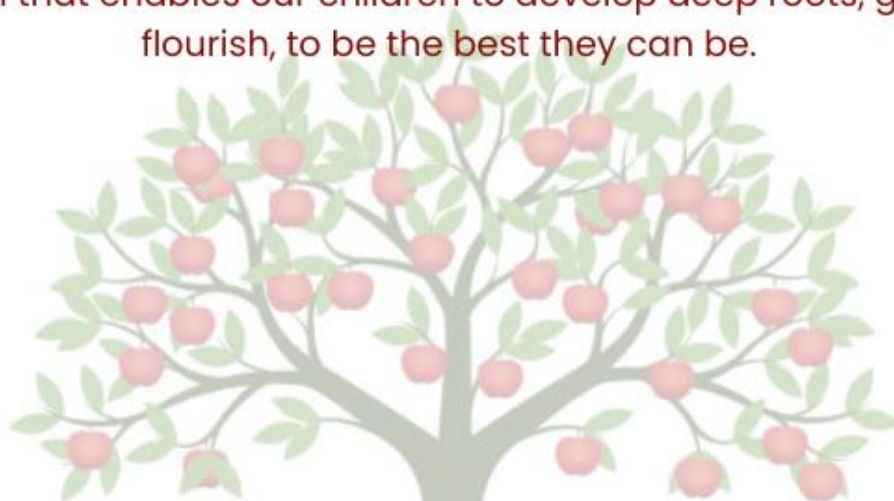
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St Bartholomew's Vision

To be a loving and nurturing Christian school community, providing the rich soil that enables our children to develop deep roots, grow and flourish, to be the best they can be.



Our Motto

Nurture, Grow, Flourish

Keep your roots deep in Jesus and have your lives built on Him.
Be strong in the faith, just as you were taught.
Always be thankful. Col 2:7

Our Values

● Courage ● Creativity
● Joy ● Kindness ● Respect

Aims

At St Bartholomew's Primary 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

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

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Governing Board** 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
- Setting the school attendance target
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The **Headteacher**, with the support of the **Office Manager**, is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The **Office Manager** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that attendance data has been recorded accurately, using the correct coding
- Working with the Headteacher and education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Making contact with families where pupils have not arrived at school and parents have not contacted the school
- Following up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent

absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested;

- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, eg. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order;
- Notifying the Local Authority (LEA) after 15 days sickness;
- Notifying the Education Welfare Officer after 10 days unexplained absence;

Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school on time, every day during term time,
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return,
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school,
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child,
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day,
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child,
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

Registers and Lateness

To meet our legal requirements, we must take a register for each session of the day – this is morning and afternoon registration.

Morning registration opens at 8:45am

Pupils arriving after 8:55am but before 9:10am will be marked as late with the number of minutes late being recorded.

Morning registration closes at 9:10am. Pupils arriving after this time will be issued with an unauthorised absence code and the number of minutes late will be recorded.

Where lateness raises concerns, the same procedures for absences will be followed and can be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority

Education Welfare Officers can hold "late gates" and issue notices to parents and carers who arrive late.

Afternoon registration is taken at 1pm.

Pupils Leaving/Arriving During the School Day

During school hours St Bartholomew's staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day. During the school day:

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- Parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time;
- Parents of any child attending a medical/dental appointment during the school day need to produce an **appointment card/letter** or similar. Any child registered late having been for a medical or dental appointment will receive a 'Medical' absence mark which is authorised.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and signed back in on their return

Low Level Illness

St Bartholomew's Primary recognises that everyone can become ill and that whilst some illnesses may result in absence of several days or weeks, others will produce a more sporadic pattern of absence.

However, the school also recognises that a sporadic pattern of absence, particularly when it relates to low attendance, *could* be a symptom of some further concern which may have safeguarding issues.

St Bartholomew's Primary will overwhelmingly authorise absence on the say so of a parent; clearly they know their own child and his or her needs in almost all cases. However, at the advice of

Staffordshire County Council Education Welfare Officers, there are points at which the school needs to stop authorising certain absences in certain cases. Written communication will be sent to parents whose children fall into this very narrow band. The letter will explain that the school is unable to authorise absence from that point for specific absences without a doctor's note to corroborate this. The specific absences involve low level illness including but not exclusively:

- Coughs, bad chests, colds, flu,
- Upset stomach, ill, "under the weather," poorly and similar,
- Sickness and diarrhoea.

These letters may be triggered when:

- Attendance falls below 90%,
- There are no specific long absences which may skew this figure (ie measles),
- There are no absences such as holiday that may skew this figure,
- There is no pattern that could provide an explanation – such as regular trips to hospital,
- The cause of more than 5% absence is as a consequence of low level illness which is hard to disprove such as those listed above as these may be used as an easy excuse

The above trigger criteria may be bypassed at the judgement of the Headteacher in conjunction with the Education Welfare Worker or similar agencies.

Leave of Absence

In line with the Government's amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised except under exceptional circumstances.

- The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:
- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school governors, **prior** to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

Exceptional Circumstances

St Bartholomew's Primary consider exceptional to mean unique and significant. The prime focus of any decision would be based on whether the absence would very significantly outweigh the loss of teaching time. However, this will need to be balanced with the regulations which make it clear absence should not be authorised in most circumstances. Therefore, the term, "very significant" would be a prime consideration.

The decision whether or not to authorise a holiday should be justified and any reason for rejection must be recorded and conveyed to the parent(s) in writing. A letter refusing a request should explain the reason it is not deemed to be a special circumstance. A penalty notice per parent per child may be issued if the holiday is taken without the school's permission.

Penalty Notices

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in the first five days of exclusion.

Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if one of the following criteria is met:

- There is unauthorised persistent absence. "Persistent" means at least 20 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of twelve school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.
- There is a period of absence not authorised by the head teacher or in excess of the period authorised by the head teacher
- Persistent late arrival at school, i.e. after the register has closed. "Persistent" means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These late episodes do not need to be consecutive.
- The presence of an excluded child in a public place at any time during school hours in that child's first five days of exclusion. An "excluded child" is one who has been excluded from school for a given period under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- A Penalty Notice will not be issued in respect of children in the care of the LA with whom other interventions will be used.

Other conditions

- There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of absence can be used in an academic year,
- In cases where there is more than one pupil in a family with unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may be issued for more than one child.
- Use of a Penalty Notice or formal warning of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised persistent absence / lateness will be restricted to one notice/ warning per parent of a pupil per academic year.