

Attendance Policy

St Barnabas' C of E Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Expectations of pupils:

- 1 that they will attend school regularly, aiming for an attendance rate of 100%
- 2 that they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day
- 3 that they will inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school

Expectations of parents:

- 1 That they will ensure their child/ren attends school, aiming for a 100% attendance rate
- 2 That they will contact school as soon as it is reasonably practical (eg by 9.30am) on every day their child is unable to attend
- 3 That any absence is followed by a written explanation of why the child was absent and for what period of time if it is more than one day
- 4 To ensure that their child arrives in school well prepared for the school day
- 5 To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- 6 To refrain from taking the child out of school for holidays, or occasional days, unless there are significant exceptional circumstances

Expectations of school:

- 1 To ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of presence / absence
- 2 To refer to appropriate support agencies as required
- 3 To communicate clear expectations of what is good attendance
- 4 To give clear guidance as to how good attendance is promoted

Expectations of governors:

- 1 To monitor the effectiveness of the policy through Head teacher reports
- 2 To support the school in encouraging good attendance through role modelling
- 3 To communicate with parents and other agencies as appropriate
- 4 To nominate members for the attendance panel
- 5 To attend celebration assemblies for good attendance

School Procedures

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).
2. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 08:55 am. The registers will remain open for 25 minutes.
2. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.
3. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 12:55 pm

The registers will close at 1:15 pm

4. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.
5. Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.
6. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

First Day of Absence

1. Parents are expected to contact the school as soon as it is reasonably practical (eg by 9:30 am) on every day their child is unable to attend.
2. Parents of pupils who are absent with no explanation will be contacted daily by a member of the office staff.
3. The information is then recorded accordingly in the class registers and logged in a record book held in the school office.

Response to non attendance

1. If a child is absent and we are not informed of a reason the teachers are requested to follow this up. If there is no explanation a letter will be authorised and sent from the office to the home to confirm the reason for absence.
2. Where there has been no response, or explanation, the school will post a letter to the parents/carers requesting information regarding the absence.
3. Where there continues to be no response to the school intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the school will refer the issue to the Attendance & Engagement Service.
4. If a child's attendance slips below 95%, the school will initially write to parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the head will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Attendance and Engagement Officer if appropriate.
5. If a child is repeatedly late, the school will initially write to parents expressing concerns about late arrival and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the head will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Attendance and Engagement Officer if appropriate.

6. In extreme circumstances, where the issue cannot be resolved between school and parents, with the support of the Attendance and Engagement Officer, the school will refer the matter formally to the Attendance and Engagement Service and, where necessary, legal proceedings will be instigated.

Legal proceedings may be considered against a Parent/ Carer if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period
- they allow their child to take holiday in term time without the school's authorisation
- they fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after an extended holiday
- their child persistently arrives late for school after the registration is closed

Ten Day Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Administrator Ellie Mason to be aware of and bring attention to the Headteacher, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

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

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to The County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

1. they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
2. they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
3. they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
4. their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases may be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The Home/School agreement can be used in this way.

Weekly attendance data and number of late's per class will be published weekly in the school newsletter.

Leave of Absence

Family holidays must be taken during school holidays. As of 1st September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question by submitting a request for absence form. Each request will be considered individually, paying due respect to current attendance levels and the impact on learning.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

Absence without a valid reason will be unauthorised.

Authorisation of any absence is at the discretion of the Head Teacher. The provision of a note does not automatically authorise absences. Absences can only be authorised within the context of the law.

Incentives for good attendance.

1. Children who achieve 100% attendance in the academic school year will be awarded with a certificate at the end of term 3 which will be presented during the school assembly.
2. Children who achieve over 95% attendance in the academic school year will be awarded with a certificate at the end of term 3.
3. Attendance data will be checked termly by the attendance officer to identify any issues.
4. Attendance will be discussed at regular staff meetings where staff have the opportunity to express any concerns.
5. Parents will receive reports on their child's level of attendance at Parent consultations twice a year.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

St Barnabas' school targets are 95.5%

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes. Alternatively electronic back-ups can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years.

Entries in paper registers must be in ink. All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)
The registers must be safely stored. The registers are locked in the office overnight.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised Absence: This is for pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.
2. Authorised Absence: This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.
3. Approved Educational Activity: This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include: Field trips & educational visits, sporting activities, link courses or approved education off site and most types of dual registration.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for the attendance returns purposes.

Summary

Through the implementation of the policy, the following will be achieved:

- 1 a 100% attendance rate.
- 2 a positive partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the children's learning.
- 3 clear and transparent procedures and expectations understood by all stakeholders.

Date of review.....

Signed.....**(Chair of Governors)**

Signed.....**(Headteacher)**