



St. Barnabas
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
Creating Unique Possibilities

Pupil Attendance Policy

Adopted: February 2021

Review Date: February 2024



This policy was adopted by St Barnabas Church of England Multi Academy Trust Board of Directors on:

Date: March 2021



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Introduction

Our schools' mission is founded on The Parable of the Talents. We believe that each of us is created with gifts and talents that make us who we are and that each of us is a gift to the world. Our aim is to grow individual talents so that we can all live lives to the full, in community. This is the right of every child.

Our schools are places where every person has the right to be themselves, to be included and to learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone in our schools is equal and treats each other with respect and kindness. We see attendance at school as synonymous with effective safeguarding as well as enabling children to achieve their full potential.

1 Aims and Purpose of the Policy

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance, punctuality and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and deserve
- Raising the importance of learning; every lesson counts
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'.

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DfE Aug 2020

2 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold, and it complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3 Roles and responsibilities

The board of trustees and local governing body

The board of trustees/local governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher or head of school

The headteacher or head of school is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The family liaison officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance or trends to the headteacher or head of school
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They promote the importance of regular attendance and punctuality with parents and children and ensure opportunities to catch up with learning are provided.

Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on SIMS, the school system. They work alongside other school staff to prepare reports and patterns of attendance for cohorts, vulnerable groups and individual children.



4 Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:40 am on each school day. This time is used to support mental recall of key facts that support our core curriculum.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9 am and will be kept open until 9:15 am. The register for the second session will be taken after the lunch break.



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4.1.1 Attendance during Coronavirus Pandemic

To support social distancing on site, we are staggering the start and end of day as follows:

Class	Room	Session Times	Entrance/ Exit Pick up/ Drop off
Nursery	Nursery	08.45-11.45 11.45-12.15 12.15-3.15	Nursery Entrance
YR - Adventurers - Miss Drury	Reception Classroom	0900 - 3.05pm	Reception playground door
Y1 - Explorers - Mrs Hall	Explorers Classroom	0850 - 3.05pm	Explorers playground door
Y2 - Voyagers - Miss Roberts	Voyagers classroom	0850 - 3.05pm	Voyagers playground door
Y2/3 - Pioneers - Miss Hodgetts	Pioneers Classroom	0850 - 3.05pm	Pioneers Playground door
Y3/4 - Wanderers - Miss Cox	Wanderers Classroom	0840 - 3.15pm	Wanderers Playground door
Y4 - Globetrotters - Mrs De-St-Croix	Globetrotters Classroom	0840 - 3.15pm	Globetrotters Playground door
Y5 - Buccaneers - Mrs McHale	Buccaneers Classroom	0840 - 3.15pm	Buccaneers Playground door



4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents must notify their school by telephone.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Notifications can be made via telephone or email to the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to Authorised and Unauthorised Absence below to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Our school promotes punctuality by asking children to apologise if they are late and commit to catching up with any lost learning. We also celebrate Attendance Heroes (Here Everyday Ready On-time) in our weekly celebration assembly. The class with the highest attendance and punctuality are rewarded with 5 minutes of



extra play on a Friday, as long as overall class attendance exceeds 97%. This is a reward as learning time has been optimised throughout the week.

Our home school agreement and attendance leaflet promotes the importance of punctuality and attendance for learning and the development of life values by making the amount of lost learning time clear.

The family liaison officer or education welfare officer will make contact with parents if punctuality becomes a concern (i.e. regular)

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephone
- If we are unable to make contact via the telephone we will try email and text
- If contact is still not possible, this raises a concern and we may visit the home to make sure all is well
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Individual attendance will be featured in parent teacher meetings throughout the year. on updates on children's progress and in the annual report. The headteacher and family liaison officer will make contact with any attendance that drops below 97%. This may be via text, phone call, letter or home visit, depending on individual family circumstances and concerns around the amount of absence.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Headteachers and head of schools will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, outweighing the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another but the normality will be that requests for authorised absence will be refused.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)



- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Enabling service families to spend time together where a parent has been deployed away from home

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Attendance below 90% is defined by the DFE as persistent absence. This is based on the following findings:

- Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school, only three per cent manage to achieve five A* to Cs including English and maths.
 - Of pupils who miss between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of school, only 35 per cent manage to achieve five A* to C GCSEs including English and maths.
 - Of pupils who miss less than five per cent of school, 73 per cent achieve five A* to Cs including English
- Persistent absence: government changes definition to deal with reality of pupil absenteeism in schools 2011**

We take persistent absence extremely seriously. We will share individual attendance data with parents termly via parent meetings and our reporting systems. However, where we are concerned that school absence is rising, we will contact individual families to identify possible reasons and explore solutions to help attendance improve.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:



- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We promote attendance in the following ways

- Home/school agreement
- Regular monitoring of attendance in order to support where absence is high
- A family liaison officer to build home school relationships and support where necessary
- Working with with other agencies, such as Early Help, Family Support Workers etc
- Weekly HERO (Here Everyday Ready On-time) award for the highest percentage class
- Texts/letters home when attendance drops below 95%
- Regular reporting to parents on individual child's attendance (at least three times a year)
- Reminders on school newsletters and social media
- End of year certificate for all children over 97%

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance and family liaison officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. This is summarised weekly.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). Parents will be asked for an estimated time of illness. There is no need for parents to call each day, unless the illness extends beyond the estimated time.

If a pupil's absence goes above ten days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the board of trustees and the local governing body.



Attendance is monitored weekly for any emerging patterns below 97%. Parents will be contacted if attendance falls below 95% in order to explore reasons for the absence and to see how school can support the pupil and family further.

The Trust Education Welfare Officer meets regularly with the Head Teacher/Head of School to discuss action required for pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. Our school collects and stores attendance data, in order to :

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the executive leadership team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full board of trustees.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy



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Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		



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C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed



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Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

