

St. Joseph & St. Bede R.C. Primary School

Supported by Bury Local Authority



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement:

Our school is a welcoming, Catholic community, with Christ at the centre. Through worship, we come together to listen and speak to God, to spread the Gospel message and to move forward in faith together. As 'Guardians of life and creation'; we work together with respect, understanding, honesty and joy, to develop love, tolerance and justice for all. We strive for greatness in our learning, we develop our unique talents and each day we take pride in all our efforts and achievements.

Approved by: Mrs. J. Myerscough

Date: January 2019

Last reviewed on: January 2019

**Next review due
by:** January 2020

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Statement of Intent

St. Joseph & St. Bede Primary School is a successful school and your son/daughter plays a vital role in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. School should be a happy and enjoyable experience for all students. It is a place where learning takes place, where friendships are formed and where social and educational skills are developed within a safe and secure environment.

For all children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Pupils who fail to attend regularly experience educational and social disadvantage at school and their future life prospects can be impaired. They can also be at risk of drifting into anti-social and criminal behaviour. Pupil absence can also disrupt teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same classroom environment.

To ensure your child reaches his/her full potential it is very important that you make sure that your child attends regularly and punctually, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

1. Legal framework

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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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.

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures at St. Joseph & St. Bede R.C. Primary School.
- 2.2. The governing body has overall responsibility for 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.
- 2.3. The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.
- 2.4. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school.
- 2.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for following the Attendance Policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 2.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 2.7. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- 2.8. Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

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.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- 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 sessions (5 school days) makes % attendance per pupil, per batch period well below 90% Persistent Absence Threshold for any reason.

4. Training of staff

4.1. The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.

4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their new starter induction.

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

5. Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

5.1 Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;

5.2 Respond as soon as possible to any contact made by the school;

5.3 . Contact school daily to inform of reasons for absence;

5.4 In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the education welfare officer;

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Send you letters regarding concerns about your child’s school attendance;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Headteacher if absences persist;
- Inform you that further absences may not be authorised without medical evidence;
- Request that a Penalty Notice be issued regarding unauthorised absence;

- Refer the matter to the schools allocated Attendance Officer if there is an ongoing issue or concerns regarding attendance;
- A reminder letter will be sent out once attendance falls below 92%;
- If attendance continues to fall you will be invited for a pre-referral meeting with the attendance officer.

6. Contact information

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your son/daughter by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

7. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO):

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to their Parent Support Advisor and Pastoral Teacher Assistant. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the SAO can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the SAO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

8. Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your son/daughter misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school doors open at **8.50am** and we expect your son/daughter to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9:00 am** and your son/daughter will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

Unauthorised lates from **9:15** a.m.

At **9.00 am** the registers will be closed.

The afternoon registration starts at **1:15 pm** and we expect your son/daughter to be in class at that time.

Registers are closed at **3.15pm**.

All pupils who arrive late must sign in at the main Office.

In accordance with the Regulations, if your son/daughter arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and/or Education Welfare Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your son/daughter to school on time.

9. Term Time leave:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your son/daughter's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law for time off in school time to go on holiday.

- 9.1. At St. Joseph & St. Bede R.C. Primary, 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.
- 9.2. The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- 9.3. 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.
- 9.4. As a school we follow Bury Local Authority guidelines concerning term time absences.
- 9.5. 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.
- 9.6. 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.

10. Religious Observance:

The school will authorise absence that is due to religious observance but the day must be:

- exclusively set apart for the religious observance;
- set apart by the parent's religious body, not the parents.

11. Appointments

- 11.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 11.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 11.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be

collected at the school office by a parent/carer but will then not be eligible for 100% attendance at the end of the year. 12.4. Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

12. Young carers

- 12.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 12.2. The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 12.3. 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.

13. Monitoring and review

- 13.1. The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 13.2. St. Joseph & St. Bede's attendance target is 97 percent
- 13.3. This policy is reviewed every two years by the headteacher; the next scheduled review date for this policy is January 2020.
- 13.4. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs L. Teasdale 0161 764 3781

Ms S. Dunlop LA Attendance officer - Supported by Mrs. T. Beswick (Family Support Advisor)

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils; this will ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Signed: _____ Headteacher

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors

Reviewed: 14.1.19

Next Review: 14.1.20