



## **St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School**

*Live the Gospel and when necessary use words*

*Our mission as a Roman Catholic primary school is to provide a catholic education that puts the word of God at the centre of our school. Our purpose is the happiness of all of our community through the pursuit of school-wide excellence; with success measured on our ability to sustain and enhance our position as a thriving example of Christ-centred education.*

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# **Policy Attendance & Punctuality**

**Review date – July 2018**

### **School Agreed Statement**

The school recognises the need for every pupil on roll to attend everyday, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. We will endeavour to ensure that all partners: staff, parents, governors, LA staff and the wider community are all accountable and work together in support of the school's attendance policy which is essential if effective schooling is to take place.

### **Every School Day Counts**

95% attendance - 2 weeks absence

90% attendance - 4 weeks absence

80% attendance - more than half a term absence

### **Aims and Guiding principles**

- To successfully implement the school's attendance policy, the law and the local authority policy and procedures.
- To ensure pupils attain a regular pattern of attendance and punctuality that will support levels of achievement in school
- To foster positive attitudes to school and make best use of all resources and opportunities offered.
- To guide and support all partners on attendance issues.
- To work towards attaining school attendance targets and so achieve and sustain high levels of attendance at St Bernadette's.

### **School/Governors Responsibility**

- Every teacher is responsible for the registration of pupils at the beginning of each school session and ensure that this paper copy is passed to the office to record electronically.
- Mrs. Cairns, the Attendance Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that follow up action is taken, including informing parents, when pupils are absent or persistently late. This will include parental consultations to discuss with the Attendance Coordinator and/or class teacher ways in which their child's attendance and/or punctuality can be improved.
- The school will conduct regular liaison with the Local Authorities attendance team ensuring that referrals are made when necessary.
- All staff will provide positive communication to parents and apply a consistent approach encouraging punctual regular attendance from all pupils.
- To provide information on year/termly school attendance and holidays during term time.
- That individual pupil attendance rate and lateness is informed through parental reporting, termly attendance reviews and at other appropriate parent/teacher meetings.

- To encourage and inform pupils on the importance of daily attendance/punctuality in relation to their overall attainment gains and to praise and promote good attendance and punctuality across the school by awarding certificates in celebration assemblies.
- That Governors, support and work in partnership with school staff in the raising of attendance levels and the setting of realistic school attendance targets. The School has a responsibility to inform the Governors on attendance through the Head Teacher's termly report.

### **Parental Responsibility**

- Parents need to take the responsibility of their child's daily attendance and Punctuality at St Bernadette's very seriously. Parents should support and ensure their child keeps the agreed school times:
  - School opens for children at 8.50 am
  - School Gates closed and teaching time starts 9.00 am (after which admission through main doors only)
- Parents should notify the school (as soon as possible) of any absence their child has. This can be done on the school absence line 2007363 option 1, a direct conversation, a telephone call to school, an email or a written note if aware of absence in advance (ie. appointment). If your child is absent and you have not notified school we will contact a parent or guardian via text message/phone call. If we do not find out why your child is absent they will be recorded as unauthorized (please note we need an adult to inform us the reason for absence, a sibling passing a message on is not sufficient).
- Any application for Leave of Absence should be at least 4 weeks in advance (where possible) and will only be authorized in "Exceptional Circumstances." The Department for Education states that 'Headteachers may NOT grant leave of absence during term time (including family holidays).
- Parents should inform the class teacher in advance where possible, of medical/dental appointments with supporting documents e.g. hospital letter, appointment card etc
- Parents should support the school's attendance policy to the full and enter constructive dialogue with staff regarding their child's nonattendance/punctuality.

### **Managing excellent attendance**

Identifying and praising good attendance can play a major role in the improvement of the overall school attendance rate. At St Bernadette's we celebrate and acknowledge this in a number of ways:-

- Praising the individual pupil
- Recognition in school assemblies

- Trophy and treats for Best Class Attendance on a weekly basis and recognition on our weekly blog.
- Presenting the individual with an achievement/attendance certificate
- Written comments on parental reports
- Commending pupils who have been making an effort to improve their attendance

It is important that the school responds to pupils showing excellent attendance. Special certificates and a prize are given to those pupils who have 100 per cent attendance over the whole year, and to the class with the best annual attendance.

### **Attendance Targets**

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by, the senior staff and governors. These attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. Targets at St. Bernadette's are consistently 96%+.

### **Managing non-attendance / persistent lateness.**

#### **Authorised absences**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian in writing or through a telephone call. Only the school alone is able to make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority therefore not all absences that are supported by a parent will be authorised.

#### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. Below is a list of some reasons that are classified as unauthorised absences.

shopping trip	birthday treat/family treat
visiting relatives	family work patterns/commitments
parent unwell	Child refuses to come to school or
another sibling unwell	wants to stay at home
waking up late	parental choice
holidays in term time without authorisation	

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and office staff for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is a concern about a child's absence, they will notify the school office immediately. The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence.

In line with the DfE document 'Children missing in Education' (September 2016), school will notify the Local Authority if a child 'fails to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission.'

Every half term, we inform parents when their child's attendance has fallen below 90%. If attendance falls below 85% this is classed as "Persistent Absence" and the attendance of that child will be closely monitored by school. Of course there are often genuine reasons for low attendance where school can offer support.

If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences school will contact the parent/guardian. If the situation does not improve, and there is a long-term general worry about the attendance of the child the school will then contact the LA support services, who will contact the parents or guardians.

### **Punctuality**

Registers are taken soon after each session begins and any child who is not in class when this registration occurs and who subsequently arrives at school will be marked as late. Some figures for you:

**Lateness = Lost Learning**  
**5 mins late each day - 3 days learning lost**  
**10 mins each day - 6.5 days learning lost**  
**15 mins lost each day - 10 days learning lost**  
**30 mins late each day - 19 learning days lost**

### **Holidays in Term Time**

As previously mentioned, Headteachers are not permitted to authorize 'time off' during term time unless the circumstances are considered to be exceptional. If you do need an absence day, you should fill in a form at the school office to request permission from the head teacher. These exceptional absences may not be authorised if children have attendance below the national average or the timing is inappropriate and will affect the child's educational experience (e.g. absence in the first week of a new academic year or in their SATS year). If a child is taken out of school for a holiday without school authorisation, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Any unauthorised absences above 5 days will be reported to the Local Authority who may issue you with a Penalty Notice which will have a financial implication.

The Board of Governors at St Bernadette's offer their full support in ensuring the schools attendance policy is carried out to the full.