



# Attendance Policy

## Introduction

It is widely recognised that the educational outcomes and future life chances of children can be significantly impacted upon by periods of absence. In order for a child to reach their full educational potential, a high level of attendance is essential and therefore every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils, parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

## Principles

Regular attendance is important because:

- Every child has a right to an education
- There is a direct link between under achievement and poor attendance
- It helps to ensure children are appropriately safeguarded
- It encourages social as well as academic progress
- School routines become easier to follow
- Children become more engaged as active learners

## This policy will aim to:

- Demonstrate a strong attendance ethos that improves the overall attendance of pupils and reduces the number of persistently absent pupils
- Develop a framework which identifies the roles and responsibilities of the whole school community
- Establish a clear attendance banding system and escalation of intervention model as part of a non-bureaucratic system for monitoring and promoting attendance (appendices 1 & 2)
- Support safeguarding through its unknown absence procedure (appendix 3)
- Create a clear structure for promoting excellent attendance and tackling absence
- Encourage the use of attendance data and other information to improve school and pupil performance
- Promote the general importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents and carers
- Enable early intervention when a pupil's absence gives cause for concern
- Put support systems in place for vulnerable pupils
- Reward and celebrate good and improved attendance
- Promote effective partnerships with external support agencies and the Local Authority

Regular and punctual attendance is subject to education law and this policy is written within that context.

### Legal framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, states that if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

### Categorising absence – authorised and unauthorised

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher and cannot be authorised by parents and carers. **All absences will be treated as unauthorised** unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents and carers should advise the school by telephone or in person by 8:45am on the first day of absence and provide an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent or carer on the child's return.

### Illness

Absence due to illness can be authorised by the Principal if parents and carers follow the correct protocol for reporting absence as detailed. Parents and carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. They will be informed of this by letter. Failure to provide medical evidence when requested will result in unauthorised absence.

### Medical and dental appointments

Absence for medical and dental appointments may be authorised by the Headteacher on occasion but parents and carers are advised, where possible, to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day or during holiday periods. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend for part of the day. Parents and carers should show an appointment card to the school office to confirm the appointment. Failure to do so may result in absences being marked as unauthorised.

### Other authorised circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to **exceptional circumstances**, for example family bereavement or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package. In order for such absence to be authorised the parent or carer must liaise with the Headteacher.

### Leave of absence: Holidays in term time

Leave of absence is not a parental right and every effort should be made to avoid holidays during term time. St Paul's CE Primary School acknowledges all absence results in lost learning and directly affects a child's education. The law stipulates that the cost of a holiday is not reasonable grounds for claiming exceptional circumstance.

Applications should be made in writing using the Exceptional Circumstances Holiday Request Form (appendix 4), with a minimum notice of 2 weeks and only where a pupil's attendance for the current and previous academic year has reached the school target (96%). Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

It is noted that a pupil who takes 10 days holiday will only be able to achieve a maximum of 94.7% attendance for the full academic year. This is a poor level of attendance which would leave the pupil in our ORANGE attendance band.

In cases of unauthorised leave of absence the academy may request that a Penalty Notice be issued.

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 a Penalty Notice fine is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this time but within 28 days. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will trigger a fast-track prosecution under the provisions of Section 444, 1996 Education Act.

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol (appendix 5).

Additionally, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) 2013, pupils may be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies

- 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence have occurred, and both the local authority and the school have tried to locate the pupil or
- The pupil has failed to attend within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which leave was granted

The school will follow the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Protocol (appendix 6), when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

### Religious observance

St Paul's CE Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside holiday periods or weekends.

Consideration will be given to authorising leave for religious observance in line with officially identified days. Parents and carers are requested to give advance notice if they intend for their child to be absent for this reason.

No more than one day may be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance or festival and no more than three days will be considered in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised and in such cases the academy may request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

### **Traveller absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend as regularly and as frequently as possible. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending as regularly as that trade permits.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity or dual registered when:

- The child is on roll and attending another school or academy

## Attendance

**At St Paul's it has always been well recognised that good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to a child's or young person's future prospects.**

By law, parents whose children are of compulsory school age and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they fail to do this they are guilty of an offence and may be given a penalty notice or prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

From 2013 legislation does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. It will be for schools to define 'exceptional circumstances' and you will receive written notification of the decision made.

Headteacher's will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Parents will be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

If a child needs to attend a medical appointment, parents should always try to make this outside of the school day, or make it for mid morning so that children can be given their registration mark at the start of the school day, and be back in school before lunch

Parent/carers are asked to contact the school office before 8.55, explaining the reason, if their child is going to be absent (01274 679183)

**96 – 100% GREEN (less than 8 days in any academic year)**

This is a good level of attendance that gives a child a firm basis on which to build. Feedback to pupils and parents will be positive and encouraging. Incentives will be utilized as a reward including, extra play times, certificates, gift vouchers and trophies

**90 - 95.9% ORANGE (less than 19.5 days in any academic year)**

Attendance at this level is becoming a cause for concern. Early intervention measures will be used to prevent more significant patterns of absence developing. Concern letters will be issued and parents invited to contact school for discussion.

**89.9% and below RED (more than 19.5 days in any academic year)**

If a child has attendance below 90% the Government class them as Persistently absent. Attendance at this level is a serious cause for concern in terms of safeguarding and missed learning. Actions at this stage will be more intensive and may include meetings with parents, Attendance panels, Completion of a CAF, Parenting Contract agreed including targets, warning letters, targeted casework, referral to specialist external agencies, referral to school nurse/ health professionals and the use of legal sanctions such as penalty notices and referral to the Local Authority for consideration of prosecution.

## Punctuality

**School starts at 8.45am each day.** Registers close at 8.55am. Any child who arrives in school after this time will be given a late mark. A child who arrives in school after 9.30am will be issued with an absent mark for the morning session.

## Appendix 2

### Escalation of Intervention and Decision Making Protocols

All parents are expected to play their part in securing excellent attendance at St Paul's CE Primary School and information will be made readily available to them via the school office, display boards, newsletters, parents evening's and the schools' website.

**Pupil identified as GREEN (96% - 100%)** - Whole school initiatives and reward schemes will be utilised.

**Pupils identified as ORANGE (90%-95.9%)** – Concerns will be raised through our Attendance Officers who will contact parents via phone calls, letters, home visits or informal meetings at the school. Pupils will be informed of concerns and asked if anything is preventing them from attending regularly. Reasons for absence will be explored and support will be offered to families.

**Pupil identified as RED (89.9% and below)**– A system of intervention will be set-up in consultation with the Headteacher who will oversee all pupils in this category. Parents will be invited to attend meetings to discuss issues and action plans will be devised, setting targets for improvement. Warning letters will be issued and referral for statutory action measures will be considered if parents fail to engage or fail to secure adequate improvement.

If pupils hit the Persistent Absence threshold of 90% attendance, referral may be made to specialist external agencies for intensive support. It would be expected that at this point a referral for CAF would be completed and parents are expected to engage with this process

#### **Where concerns are raised the following protocol will be followed:-**

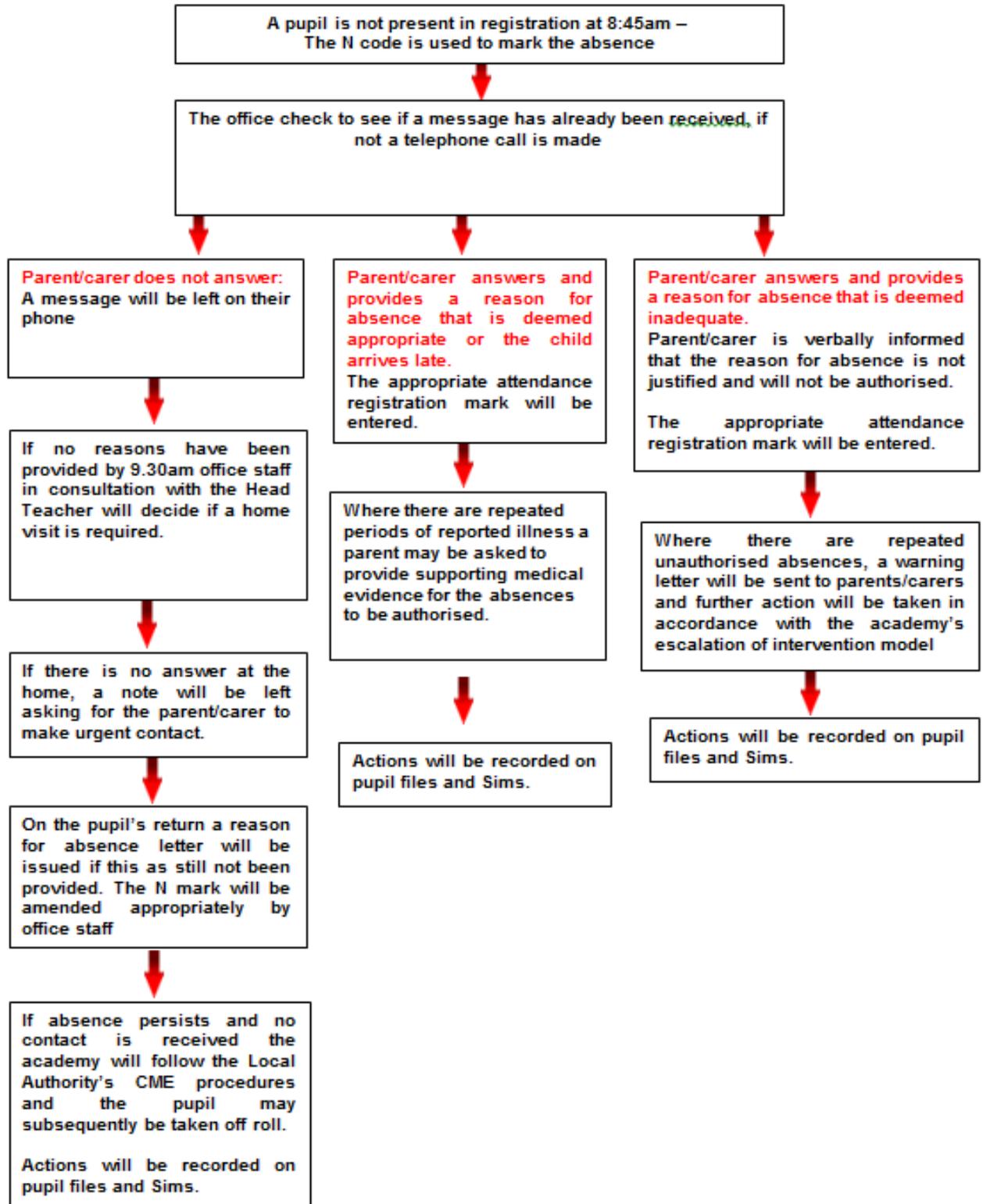
- Our Attendance Officers will review the child's registration certificate to investigate patterns of absence and they will set up an individual pupil file
- Concerns letters will be issued to parents as appropriate to raise the profile of this issue
- The child's attendance will be monitored weekly and parents will be informed of this via phone calls, letters or informal discussions
- A pupil meeting will take place where the child will be asked if they have any concerns or issues that are affecting their attendance

#### **If attendance fails to improve and further absences are recorded then the level of intervention will be escalated**

- The child's attendance will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher who will take an active lead
- Parents will be invited to a formal meeting where targets will be set and an action plan will be created to support these
- A review meeting will be held half termly

- If the parent fails to attend the meeting a second appointment letter will be issued and a record of attempted intervention will be kept. The parent will be warned that this may be used in evidence if the Local Authority were to seek a prosecution at a later date
- If poor attendance continues and the parent is not engaging with the school a referral may be made to a specialist external agency for intensive intervention
- By this stage the parent will be requested to agree to a referral for a CAF
- Failure to secure regular school attendance at this stage may result in a referral to the Local Authority to take statutory action under the provisions of Section 444, Education Act 1996
- In order to fulfil its legal obligations school representatives and/or their agents may make a written statement and appear as a witness for the prosecution in any subsequent legal case

## St Pauls CE Primary School Unknown Absence Procedure



## APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Name of School ..... DfE No. ....

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. Bradford Council expects all parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Absences due to holidays, taken during term time can seriously impact on a pupil's academic attainment. **Bradford Council's policy is to only grant leave of absence in the most exceptional circumstances.** If permission is given for Leave of Absence the Headteacher will determine the number of days of absence.

**Failure to return your child on the agreed date could result in a Penalty Fine of £60 (per parent, per child) being issued by Bradford Council and your child losing their place at school.**

If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to school at least two weeks before the intended departure. Thank you.

### PARENTS SECTION

Surname of child		First name	
Date of birth		Class	
Surname of parent/guardian		First name of parent/guardian	
Address of child			
Postcode		Telephone number	
Reason for absence			
Length of absence applied for (number of school days)		Destination	
Date of departure		Date due back in school	
Emergency telephone contact in the Bradford district	Emergency telephone contact abroad		
Parent's/guardian's signature			Date

### SCHOOLS SECTION

Date of meeting with parent/s		Headteacher's signature		Date
Leave of Absence	Approved for		School days	
	Not approved for		School days	
Ethnic origin of child	White	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Indian
Chinese	Black-Caribbean	Black-African	Black-other	Other
Gender of child	Female	Male		
Number of previous applications granted				
Reason for refusing Leave of Absence				

**Please Retain for School Records**

**In the event of the child not returning within 10 schools days of the agreed return date and no satisfactory explanation has been provide for the none return the child can be removed from the school register. A Children Missing Education referral should be made to the Education Social Work Service who will require a copy of this form. For further information please see Bradford Council Leave of Absence, Holidays in Term Time and Extended Leave of Absence – Guidance for Schools or Children Missing Education ‘If A Child Goes Missing’.**



## Penalty Notice Protocol

### 1. Legal Basis:

**Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LEA officers, Headteachers (& Deputy and Assistant Headteacher's authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.**

**The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004.**

**The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform with all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all Equal Opportunities legislation.**

**Bradford Council has the prime responsibility for developing the protocol within which all partners named in the Act will operate.**

### 2. Purpose:

**Bradford Council recognises that regular school attendance plays a crucial role in raising educational standards for children and young people and in turn contributing to the broader social inclusion agenda.**

**The law states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age must ensure their child receives efficient, full-time and suitable education. Under the Education Act 1996 a parent may be prosecuted if they fail to ensure their child attends regularly.**

**Fixed penalty notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available to Bradford Council to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.**

**The Education Social Work Service is responsible for fulfilling Bradford Council's statutory responsibilities to promote and enforce school attendance. The Service works in partnership with schools to support parents and pupils and to overcome barriers to securing good attendance.**

**The use of sanctions is only considered appropriate when there is reasonable expectation that their use will secure improvement.**

### 3. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

**A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.**

**Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per pupil per academic year.**

**In cases where families contain more than one poor-attending pupil, multiple issue may occur but this will be the subject of careful consideration and co-ordination.**

**There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.**

**The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:**

- **overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps),**

- parentally-condoned absences,
- unauthorised holidays in term-time,
- excessive delayed return from authorised holidays without prior school agreement,
- persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed),

To ensure consistent delivery of Penalty Notices the following criteria will apply:

- at least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil in a 6 week period.
- other than in specific circumstances\* the liable parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 20 school days to effect an improvement. An attendance target will be issued with the formal warning.  
\* *the deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without / against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not/would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions.*

Consultation between a school and the relevant officer from the Education Social Work Service should take place before considering whether a Penalty Notice would be appropriate in order to ensure that all cases are consistent with the agreed criteria.

4. Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:

The Principal Education Social Worker will issue Penalty Notices in Bradford.

Penalty Notices will only be issued by post and never as an on the spot action; this to satisfy that all evidential requirements are in place and to meet Health and Safety requirements.

The Principal Education Social Worker will receive requests to issue Penalty Notices from schools, West Yorkshire Police and neighbouring LEAs. These requests will be actioned provided that:

- all relevant information is supplied in the specified manner,
- the circumstances of the pupil's absence meets all the requirements of this Protocol,
- the issue of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other enforcement sanctions already being processed.

The Principal Education Social Worker will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt and where all criteria are met will:

- issue a formal written warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued,
- in the same letter set a period of 20 school days within which the pupil must attain the specified target,
- issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 20 day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

5. Procedure for Withdrawing Penalty Notices:

Once issued, a Penalty Notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- proof has been established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person,
- the use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this Protocol.

6. Payment of Penalty Notices:

Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

**Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent/carer liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the penalty Notice.**

**From 1 September 2013, payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after this time but within 28 days is £120.**

**The LEA retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).**

7. Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

**Non-payment of a Penalty notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of Sec 444, 1996 Education Act.**

8. Policy and Publicity

**All schools will be required to amend existing Attendance Policies to include information on the deployment of fixed penalties.**

9. Reporting and Review

**The Principal Education Social Worker will report at regular intervals to the Headteacher Associations, West Yorkshire Police and other relevant partners on the deployment and outcomes of Penalty Notices.**

**The Principal Education Social Worker will ensure a regular report will be made available to the EPP on attendance matters to include Penalty Notice use.**

**The Principal Education Social Worker will review Penalty Notice use at regular intervals.**