

# Attendance Policy 2024

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Governing Body</b>	<b>Date: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>
<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	October 2024	
<b>Review date:</b>	October 2026	

## 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 and excellent punctuality is essential and therefore every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils, parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

It is the aim of St Paul's CE Primary School that pupils attend school for a minimum of 96% of the academic year in order to ensure pupils enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason.

## 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 and punctuality 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.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make the best provision we can for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition. Please see DfE guidance documents 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2017' and 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013'

## 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 8:30am on the first day of absence and provide an expected date of return. If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

## Illness

Absence due to illness can be authorised by the Head Teacher 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.

The school follows the 2022 DfE School Attendance Guidance which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily however, In some instances we may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as

unauthorised. Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance. In order to promote good attendance, schools are required to inform the local authority of any student recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil:

- Will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness
- The pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

## **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for further information on the support available

## **Pupils taken ill during the school day**

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult, and signed out before leaving the building. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

## **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. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is. 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 4 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.

A Penalty Notice is a £160 fine issued to each parent of each child, but a discounted rate of £80 applies if the fine is paid within 21 days. If a penalty notice is issued due a second period of absence, there is no discounted rate, and £160 must be paid within 28 days.

In instances where the period of absence exceeds 20 school days, or if your child has already taken more than one leave of absence, Bradford Council may also pursue other legal options, such as a criminal prosecution at the Magistrates' Court.

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, 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

### **Effects of Late Arrival at School**

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost.

This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

<i>Attendance during school year</i>	<i>Days lost in a year</i>	<i>Which is approximately</i>	<i>Approximate number of lessons missed</i>
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

### **Fixed term suspensions**

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as a Fixed term suspension. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance for this. Any fixed term suspension must be agreed by the headteacher. The school will notify the parent of the fixed term suspension verbally and in writing. If the pupil is a Looked After Child, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker. The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out of the building. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

### **Promoting attendance**

The attendance of all pupils is closely monitored weekly by the safeguarding team to ensure early identification of any attendance concerns or patterns, this ensures we can provide families with the necessary support to remove barriers to regular school attendance.

Celebrating good and improved attendance forms part of our praise culture at St Paul's C.E. Primary School. During celebration worship each week the class with the best attendance have the opportunity to play our Attendance Monopoly game to win prizes for the class. Our 'Scores on the doors' displays also celebrate the ongoing achievement of classes and individual improvements.

### **Safeguarding and Attendance**

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

## Appendix 1

### 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 8.30am, explaining the reason, if their child is going to be absent (01274 679183)

**96 – 100% GREEN (less than 7 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 an Early Help Assessment, Parent 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.

## **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 Officer 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 Early Help 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



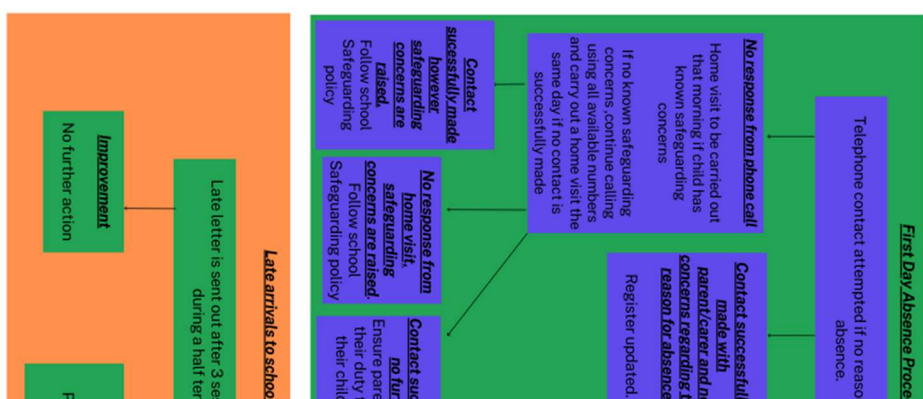
Parents will be invited to a formal meeting where targets will be set and an action plan will be created to support these

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

By this stage the parent will be requested to agree to a referral for possible Early Help Support

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 Paul's C.E. Primary School Attendance Stagg



## **Appendix 4**



### **Leave Request Form**

If parents take their children out of school without first seeking the school's permission or take their children out after permission has been denied, absences will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences are referred to Bradford Council who may issue a Penalty Notice in accordance with the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct. A Penalty Notice is a £160 fine issued to each parent of each child, but a discounted rate of £80 applies if the fine is paid within 21 days. If a penalty notice is issued due a second period of absence, there is no discounted rate, and £160 must be paid within 28 days.

In instances where the period of absence exceeds 20 school days, or if your child has already taken more than one leave of absence, Bradford Council may also pursue other legal options, such as a criminal prosecution at the Magistrates' Court.

<i>For school use only:</i>		<i>Date leave request form received and by whom?</i>		<i>Child's current attendance %</i>	
Name of Children:	First Name	Surname	Class	Date of birth	
First day/date of absence:		Date due back in school:			
Length of absence applied for (number of school days only):			days		
Destination					
<b>Contact Details of parent/carer who will be accompanying the child during the absence</b>					
First name:		First name:			
Surname:		Surname:			
Relationship to child:		Relationship to child:			
Address:		Address:			
Postcode:		Postcode:			
Email:		Email:			
Home phone number: Mobile:		Home phone number: Mobile:			
Alternative number while away:		Alternative number while away:			

Reason for absence including full explanation (use a separate sheet of paper if necessary) <b><i>The exceptional circumstances are...</i></b>	
If going on holiday, and travelling via public transport, please provide a copy of the holiday booking details e.g date/time of departure and return, flight number etc.	
Please provide details of any other leave requests, attendance issues or significant absences your child has had from school in the last 12 months.  <i>A second period of absence may result in a penalty notice issued at a flat rate of £160. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This can include considering prosecution, or other attendance legal interventions.</i>	
UK Contact details (name, address and contact number of a relative or friend who we can make contact with if you do not return on the stated date)	
Please sign to confirm you understand that if you take your child(ren) out of school without school's permission or take your child(ren) out after permission has been denied, you could receive a penalty notice fine starting at £80 per parent per child.	<b>Signed:</b>  <b>Relationship to child:</b>  <b>Date :</b>

***Please pass completed leave request forms to the school office no later than 4 weeks before the requested dates of absence.***

## Appendix 5

<https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/userfiles/file/Behaviour%20and%20Attendance/Bradford%20Penalty%20Notice%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20FINAL%2021Feb22.pdf>