

# St. Benet's Catholic Primary School

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy



**Headteacher:** Mr David Miller

**Chair of Governors:** Mrs Monica Kelsey

**Date:** October 2022

**Date for Review:** October 2023

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## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **School rationale**

The more time a child misses out on their education, the more difficult it is for them to catch up both socially and academically. At St Benet's we believe that maximising our pupil's school attendance and punctuality will improve their life chances and opportunities.

### **School aspiration**

- Maintain an attendance rate of 97% or higher and a punctuality rate of 100%
- Eradicate persistent absence and poor punctuality

### **Attendance and the law**

- The Education Act 1996 states that parents must ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive appropriate full-time education. This involves ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually. "Regularly" means in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school.\*
- A parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age, fails to attend regularly – Section 444(1) Education Act 1996. In such a situation if the parent knows that their child is not attending, they may be prosecuted for a more serious offence – Section 444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996. Failure to ensure school attendance can result in prosecution.
- Schools have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.
- Schools must maintain an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register. The Registration (Pupil
- Registration) Regulations 2006 require a school to put the child's name on the Admissions Register on the first day that the child is expected to attend school. The attendance register must be taken twice daily at the start of the morning and the afternoon session. If the pupil does not attend, they will be recorded as absent.

### **Reporting to the local authority and parental fines**

Schools must inform the Local Authority of any pupils who:

- Are persistently late after the register has closed.
- Are regularly absent from school.
- Have irregular attendance.
- Have 10 school days or more unauthorised absence.

Parents can be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Authority. Each Local Authority should publish a 'Code of Conduct' for Fixed Penalty Notices for parents to refer to.

### **Parental responsibilities**

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time (between 08.45 - 08.55) every day the school is open.\*
- If their child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. bring them in and inform a member of staff - if they don't get any better, school will contact parents to collect them.
- Only keep their child at home if they have a serious illness or injury and contact the school each day by telephone or email before 09.15 with the reason for the absence and when the child will return.
- Ensure the school has up to date contact details for 1st, 2nd and 3rd priority contacts.
- Arrange medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays where possible.

- Let the school know in advance if their child has a dental clinic or hospital appointment - bring their child to school before and/or after the appointment - pupils should miss as little education as possible.
- Request a leave of absence in advance by completing an Application for Leave of Absence form (see school website or contact the school office).
- Work in partnership with school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on attendance and punctuality.
- Give the school prior notice if their child is transferring to another school (except when leaving at the end of Year 6.)

### **School responsibilities**

- Place the same value of importance on attendance and punctuality as there is on curriculum outcomes.
- Regularly inform parents about the importance of attendance and punctuality.
- Direct parents to the attendance and punctuality policy on the school website.
- Acknowledge and reward improving and good attendance and punctuality.
- Include individual attendance and punctuality rates on termly pupil progress reports and annual reports.
- Carry out daily 'safe and well' calls, emails or texts as soon as possible following unexplained absences.
- Record, monitor and analyse attendance and punctuality, including vulnerable groups.
- Inform parents at the earliest opportunity about concerns either via a telephone call or a home visit from the school family support worker and, if deemed necessary, set up an improvement plan.
- Work in partnership with parents and other agencies in the best interest of the child; this includes referring into external agencies, e.g. School Nursing, Children's Services, CAMHS, Local Authority.

### **Authorised absence**

A school will authorise an absence under the following circumstances:

- The child is too ill to attend and the school accepts this as valid.\*\*
- The parent has advance permission following their Application for Leave of Absence.
- The child has a clinic or hospital appointment and the parent provides evidence of this.
- The child is on study leave.
- The child is being educated off-site.
- The child has been excluded.
- The absence is unavoidable due to an emergency (case law has held that stress arising from bullying, behavioural or mental health difficulties or a 'chaotic lifestyle' should not be considered an 'unavoidable cause').

### **Unauthorised absence**

An unauthorised absence is not permitted by law. Examples of unauthorised absence are detailed below:

- Holiday in term time.
- Family days out, shopping or hair cuts.
- Birthdays.
- Sleeping in.
- Waiting for a delivery.
- No explanation for the absence.

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- The explanation for the absence is considered unsatisfactory or is used persistently.

### **Children missing in education**

A child will be considered as a **Child Missing Education** when parents fail to inform the school if their child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6 to go to secondary school. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate their child. By giving school prior notice about a school transfer, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

This policy was reviewed by Governors on: October 2022

