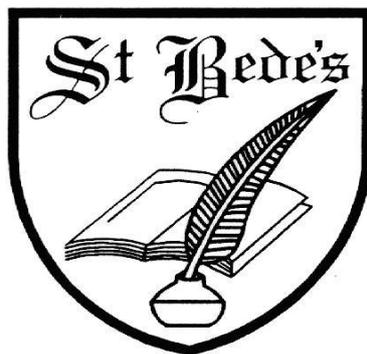


St Bede's RC Primary School



'One in unity, rich in diversity'

Attendance Policy

2015-2016

St Bede's RC Primary School

Aims

Our Attendance Policy aims to:

- raise the profile of attendance by encouraging and promoting a positive attitude in order that all children can achieve a good rate of attendance throughout their time at school.
- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents/carers, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.

- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they have notified the school if their child is absent before **9.30am daily** so that our records are accurate.
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.
- ensure that they contact the school of absence if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

Under **Section 44 of the Education Act 1996**, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he or she is a registered pupil.

Absences are considered either to be:

- **Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school considered to be due to ‘**exceptional circumstances**’.
- **Unauthorised absences** are those, which the school **does not consider reasonable** and for which **no “leave”** has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy, absences, which have not been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to receive a mark in the register.

For example:

Authorised absences	Unauthorised absences
e.g.	A family holiday
Genuine illness of the pupil	A birthday treat
Medical appointments for the pupil e.g. hospital, dental, doctors.	Shopping / day trip / visit to a theme park;
Appointments with Educational outside agencies e.g. Speech and	Looking after other children or other family members

Language therapy.	
External exams or educational assessments	Appointments for other family members
Visits to prospective new schools	Oversleeping due to a late night

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns.
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality.
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- regularly inform parents of the percentage attendance of all pupils.
- make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils the main playground is supervised from 8.45am and the whistle is blown at 8.50am for the children to line up with their class to start the school day.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.

- Registration takes place at 8.55am and pupils who arrive after 9am will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.30am and after this lateness may be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with by school and may be referred to the Local Authority Family Support Officer.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

**Weather conditions will be taken into consideration.*

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- parents are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- all pupils leaving with permission will be given a written authorisation slip by the school in case of being stopped by Truancy Patrol.

Leave of Absence

The Governing Body of St Bede's RC Primary School, will not authorise absence for holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The amendments make clear that Schools **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Please be advised that low cost travel or arrangements made by a family member or friends are not an exceptional circumstance. Similarly, the law does not grant parents/ carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Absence during term time as a result of term time holidays interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in school. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other students in the class. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations holidays during term time will **NOT** be authorised (Appendix 1). The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence **will not** be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these, but may be subject to change.

The Governors have determined that:

- Only in exceptional circumstances* will authorisation be given for leave to be taken outside the 13 weeks school holiday.
- where leave of absence is requested during term time and is considered by the applicant to be due to **exceptional circumstances**, wherever possible a supporting letter must be submitted directly to the Head Teacher for consideration. It must be understood that in certain unusual cases a decision on Authorised absence may only be made at a meeting of the Governing Body and if parents decide to go ahead with an absence this may be recorded initially as unauthorised

- if leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence** unless supported by evidence on return to school that qualifies it as an exceptional circumstance. (Please note that Parents/Carers are still required to adhere to the School Procedures for Registration- page 4).

Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect term time leave to be granted.

The Attendance Committee has responsibility for deciding if an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

* **Definition of 'Exceptional' Circumstances**

Oxford English Dictionary: Exceptional means 'unusual', 'not typical'.

The circumstances amounting to exceptional must be circumstances that rarely occur and perhaps be outside reasonable anticipation or expectation.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform St Bede's RC Primary School as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until a School Transfer Form has been filled in and the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

St Bede's RC Primary School hold attendance meetings with the Local Authority Family Support Officer, in which they are notified of any parents whose children are identified as a cause for concern. The school will work in partnership with the Family Support Agencies and Local Authority Attendance Officer to support parents of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

The Local Authority Family Support Officer may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school. Before a Penalty notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Reviewed: Autumn 2015

To be reviewed annually

Chair of Governors:.....

Appendix One



Department
for Education

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, **came into force on 1 September 2013**.

Term-time holiday

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** allowed headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a **family holiday** during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on **1 September 2013**.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children’s regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/regulations-amendments>