'Living and Learning through Christ'

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Statutory Policy

Approved by: **Vicky Palmer - Deputy Head & Governors**

Last reviewed on: **October 2025**

Next review due by: **Term 1 2028**

Version	Revision date	revision description	revised by
Adopted Oct 24	October 25	Updated school procedures Addition of Pre-school procedures	VP Governors FGB term 1

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At St Bernadette Catholic Primary school Catholicity permeates all aspects of teaching and learning. Our values and beliefs aim to provide a strong level of coherence and focus which enriches the whole child. High standards are expected and articulated so that they are made explicit to all.

Principles

The Governors and staff recognise that the maximizing of good attendance is a key task for the school if pupils are to take full advantage of opportunities on offer to them.

By sustaining a culture in which full attendance and punctuality is the norm, St Bernadette's will demonstrate to pupils, parents/carers and staff the value we place on this.
Emphasis on attendance and punctuality demonstrates our concern for individual children and we will always contact families to enquire about any unexplained absence.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. **Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence**. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). **Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.** (Requests must be made on the School's official Leave of absence form which is available from the school office) See *addendum 1 below.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice, (£160, or £80 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 10 sessions or more of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

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Roles Responsibilities and Procedures

Governing Body
It will be the responsibility of the Governors to oversee and monitor the working of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

Headteacher/Deputy Head
It will be the responsibility of the above to:

- Initiate and monitor procedures for monitoring attendance/lateness.
- Ensure all unexplained absences are investigated on the day they occur, or as soon as possible after the absence.
- Monitor attendance and lateness on a regular basis and report to Governors on the progress.
- Liaise with Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Initiate penalty notices via the Local Authority (LA)

Class Teacher
It will be the responsibility of the Class Teacher to:

- Encourage attendance/punctuality by creating a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere.
- Keep daily registers and ensure that parents' letters/messages are passed onto the Office Staff as soon as possible.

School Office Staff
It is the responsibility of Office Staff to:

- Follow up all unexplained absence/lateness
- Inform the Headteacher/Deputy head of unexplained absence/lateness
- Enter attendance details onto the school MIS system (Arbor) and produce reports as necessary
- Liaise with the EWO

Parents/carers
It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to:

- Ensure full and punctual attendance at school when the child is fit to attend thereby instilling good attendance habits.
- Comply with the School's procedures for reporting absence/lateness
- Inform the school of reasons for non-attendance by telephone call, email or in person.
- If any child is to arrive late in school, parents should contact the school office as soon as possible (before 8.55 am).
- When the child does arrive late (after 9.10am), the parent/carer must accompany the child to the School Office to sign their child in.
- If a child arrives after 9.30am this will count as an absence and they will receive a U code (Late (After Register Closes)
- Where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards, prescribed medication or receipts from Pharmacy purchases) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence, will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the Education Welfare Service will be considered.

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Procedures
It is accepted that on occasions it is not possible for a child to attend school, in which case:

- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to seek authorisation for the absence or to provide an explanation for the absence by way of a phone call, email, letter or in person'.
- If the school does not receive prior notification or subsequent explanation for the absence, then we will contact the parents to ascertain the reason.
- Only the Headteacher or The Deputy Head may give approval for absence.
- The parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from school at any time.
- Parents should provide an explanation for absence as soon as possible, with parental contact being made with School for each day of absence if a form has not been completed.
- Any child arriving after 9:10am must enter school by the main entrance and report to the School Office
- No child is to leave the school building unless they have permission from the Headteacher or Deputy Head (DHT) if the Headteacher is out. If a child becomes ill at school this must be reported to the Headteacher or DHT if the Headteacher is out. The Headteacher or DHT will decide whether the child is too ill to remain in school.

Education Welfare Service
The school may refer a pupil to the Education Welfare Service where attendance and punctuality remains a concern following school intervention. The Education Welfare Service will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

Rewards/Celebrations
Every Friday the three classes with the highest attendance will be celebrated in assembly with the reward being extra playtimes.

Pre-school procedures
While not legally mandatory, Pre-School/Nursery track attendance and encourage high participation to ensure children benefit from full educational opportunities. Regular attendance provides consistent opportunities for children to interact with peers, learn social skills, and make friends.

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends their agreed-upon hours to make the most of the entitlement.
- Parents should inform the Pre-school team of reasons for non-attendance by telephone call, email or in person by 9am.
- Parents should notify staff if their child will be absent for holidays, providing them with advance notice for planning staffing and ratios.
- The pre-school/office team will contact parents if a child is absent without notice.
- In the event a child becomes unwell whilst at pre-school the pre-school/office team will contact the emergency contacts (2 contacts need to be provided).
- The Pre-school team will liaise with the schools designated safeguarding lead if the child is absent for a prolonged period of time.

Evaluation and Review
This Policy will be reviewed every 2 years or before should the need arise, and will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.

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*Addendum 1

Leave of Absence Request Form

By signing this request I have read and understood the information provided, noting that if my request is not granted and I take my child on leave anyway, a Penalty Notice may be issued. I also understand that this absence may impact on my child's achievement.
I request that you authorise a Leave of Absence from School for my child.

Pupil Name*		Year Group	
Current Address (inc Postcode):			

* If you are requesting a Leave of Absence for more than one child, please complete a separate form for each one.

First day of absence		Date of return to school	
Total number of days requested			

Reason for the Leave of Absence Request, including details of any exceptional circumstances (Please explain why the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you require additional space please continue on a separate piece of paper)

(N.B application must come for the parent / carer with whom the child normally resides)

Signature of Parent / Carer			
Name of Parent / Carer (please print clearly)		Date of request	

School Use Only

Date of Application Received		Current Attendance	
No. of days absence so far this year		Attendance last academic year	

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Headteacher

Absence Authorised?	**Yes**		**No**
Comments (why request is not authorised or considered to be exceptional circumstances)			
Signed		Dated	

Leave of Absence Request

As per current regulations, DfE advice on school attendance (2024) and the school's Attendance Policy, we would like to advise you the Headteacher may not grant any Leave of Absence in term time unless **exceptional circumstances** exist. By exception we mean rare, significant, **unavoidable** and short. By unavoidable, we mean an event that could not reasonably be arranged at another time.

The Headteacher will not normally consider any of the reasons below as an Exceptional Circumstance and any request for a Leave of Absence for these reasons will not normally be authorised and may result in Penalty Notices being issued to parents / carers:

- Family holiday or holiday to visit relatives
- Cheaper cost of a holiday flights / accommodation during term time than during the school holidays
- Availability of the desired holiday accommodation or location
- Weather conditions in the desired holiday location
- A holiday being booked by or paid for by someone else as a gift
- Attending a wedding (including if that wedding is taking place abroad)

Please not that this list is not exhaustive.

It is a legal requirement for parents / carers to obtain permission of the Headteacher before removing their child from school in order to take any leave in term time. In order to make a request for a term time absence, you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent / carer with whom the child normally lives. Term times are for education, and children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays.

The school will assess each request on an individual basis, considering the impact that missing school will have on the child's education and any special circumstances of which we are made aware e.g. the bereavement of a close family member, the needs of the families of service personnel, or the need for time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

If an absence request is granted, it will be recorded as 'authorised absence'. If a parent / carer takes their child out of school without permission this will count an an 'unauthorised absence'.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his / her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. The

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Education Welfare Service may take formal action against you, as parent, for failure to comply with the law. **Irregular attendance (which includes unauthorised absences from school) could result in one of the following:**

1. **A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £80 per parent, per child, payable within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay may result in prosecution for the offence of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school).**

The application must be made **in advance** using the form on the reverse of this letter. If you require additional space, please continue on a separate piece of paper or attach a letter outlining the reason for the requested absence and any exceptional circumstances you wish the Headteacher to consider.

Retrospective requests will not be considered. **Please return this form to the school office no less than 10 school days before the absence is due to start.** Upon receipt of a request, a decision will be made as to whether to authorise the absence and you will receive a response in writing confirming the decision and details of any further action that me be taken against you.

A full copy of the school's Attendance Policy is available on request from the school office or can be downloaded from the school website

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

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