



St Bartholomew's CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Our Vision:

At St Bartholomew's we provide a gate way of discovery through our diverse curriculum and nurture global disciples who positively impact God's gift to us – the world. Our curriculum enables our learners to recognise their place in the wider world by enabling them to understand their place in Pinchbeck West; the importance and value of where they live. It aims to develop agents of change who are taught to protect the environment, solve problems to ensure society is a better place and take responsibility for their actions to make the future a somewhere far improved from where it is. There is clear focus on developing a rich vocabulary through a text centred approach and providing learners with the opportunity to independently gain powerful knowledge to ensure their future success. Through boundless forgiveness, compassion and a safe learning environment our children can Let their Light Shine (Matthew 5:16). We learn to love responsibly by developing the skills and knowledge needed under God's spiritual counsel, bringing light to all those around us. We are beacons of hope for our communities guided by God's spirit and love.

Community - everyone is treated with dignity through an ethos of respect for all. Care is given to our environments. This spirit permeates our daily lives as we walk side by side together following in God's footsteps.

Hope - every person is guided to fulfil their hopes and aspirations, enabling them to reach their full potential. We place no ceiling on expectations. Our growth mind-set helps us to accept where we are, understand barriers and with hope and faith overcome and succeed.

Wisdom - we give our children exceptional experiences, everlasting knowledge and equip them with the skills needed to make good judgements for the greater good, guided by God's patience and love.

Dignity - we radiate belief which generates self-worth in all who come through our doors. Everyone is reminded daily of their worth and significance in our community.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent / guardian / carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents / guardians / carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents / guardians / carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. Unauthorised absence will also be recorded for any child where the parent does not provide a reason for a child's absence.

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and will inform the school office. We operate a system where we will phone a parent / carer / guardian on each day of absence if we do not receive a daily call.
- 3.2 A note, phone call or parental visit to the school office communicating to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment. Evidence of medical appointments are requested.
- 3.3 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The office staff will attempt to make contact immediately with the parent / carer / guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- 3.4 If the school is unable to make contact a home visit will take place. If we are still unable to confirm the safety of a child then the police will be called.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1 Absence from school, for any reason, can have a negative impact on a child's educational progress and holidays in term-time should therefore be avoided. A request from a parent / carer / guardian to take their child of compulsory school age out of school during term time can only be granted by the school in exceptional circumstances such as family bereavement. In cases of requests for absence, parents should write directly to the Headteacher detailing the exceptional circumstances which necessitate the absence. It is for the Headteacher to determine if leave is granted or whether the absence will be coded as unauthorised within the school registers. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent / carer / guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents / carers / guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact LCC support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents / carers / guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by LCC, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents / carers / guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

The law

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 the parent of every child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that the child receives efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and any special educational needs they may have. This duty can be met by:

- the child regularly attending a school or alternative educational provision made by the LA or the school, or
- by the parent providing other suitable educational provision

The parent may be guilty of an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 if they fail to ensure:

- their child's regular attendance at a school at which they are a registered pupil, or
- other educational provision is made for their child

Where a child has not attended regularly at school, the LA have the options of:

- issuing a fixed penalty notice in respect of the parents of the child
- bringing proceedings before the family courts for an Education Supervision Order or
- prosecuting the parents under Section 444 before the Magistrates, Court

Non-school attendance includes any day when a child should be in attendance at school, and they are absent without the authorisation of the school. This includes:

- unauthorised holidays during term time
- persistent late arrival at school beyond the registration period

Fixed penalty notices can be issued for persistent lateness where the child arrives after the closure of registration. This is coded U in the register.

- 6.3 A leave of absence during term time will only be granted where an application is made in advance to the school and the school consider that the leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

What amounts to “exceptional circumstances” is a matter for the discretion of the Headteacher. It should be judged on a case-by-case basis. It is unlikely to amount to an exceptional circumstance if it is merely claimed that:

- a holiday abroad can only be afforded in term time or
- that a parent is unable to take leave during school holidays. (This is a matter between the parent and their employer).

The Headteacher will ask for evidence of the circumstances that have arisen where appropriate.

7 Attendance targets

7.1 The school aims to exceed average national and local attendance levels.

8 Monitoring and review

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that the attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 8.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 8.3 The rates of attendance will be reported to governors within the Headteacher’s report to Governors at FGB meetings.
- 8.4 Mrs Waine, Office Manager, monitors attendance and updates the Headteacher half-termly. The Headteacher is responsible for working with teachers, parents and children to break down barriers and improve attendance.
- 8.5 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

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