

# All Saints' CE Primary School



## Vision

Learning hand in hand together with God.

## Values

Hopeful school through honesty, forgiveness and trust  
Achieving school through resilience, respect and ambition  
Nurturing school through care, compassion and friendships  
Developing school through wisdom, faith and fun  
Sharing school through kindness, celebration and love

# Attendance Policy

**Written:** Stuart Gawthorpe, Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Updated:** September 2023

**Ratification date:** September 2023

**Ratified by:** NSG (Judith Osborne)

**Review date:** September 2024



## Attendance Policy

### Statement of Intent

All Saints' C of E Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our children. Regular attendance is critical if our children are to be successful and benefit from the rich opportunities presented to them.

The Governors, Headteacher and staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at All Saints' C of E Primary School.

### The Law on school attendance and the right to a full-time education

'The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.'

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.'

DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' September 2022

### Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts children at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents' legal responsibility to:**

- **Ensure their child attends school every day the school is open except where a statutory reason applies**
- **Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has been unexpectedly absent**
- **Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance**
- **Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible**

DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' September 2022

**Parents must contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is recorded. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning. The frequency of updates will be agreed on the first day of the absence if it is likely to be more than just the one day.**

Children are expected to arrive at school by 8:45 am. All children that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.



### Section 1: Introduction, Ethos and Background

This policy sets out the procedures through which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality and, as a consequence, raise levels of achievement.

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- Children (Performance and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DFE (2022) 'Working together to improve attendance'
- DFE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DFE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DFE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2022) Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- DfE (2022) Securing Good Attendance and Tackling Persistent Absence

We believe that there is a clear link between attendance and positive outcomes for children and young people. Research findings and learning from best practice shows that:

- **Pupils must attend regularly to achieve their full potential**
- **Pupils who miss out on school can feel vulnerable and left behind**
- **Leave in term time is disruptive and can seriously affect a child's education**
- **Pupils who consistently miss 17+ days in a school year lose one full grade in their GCSEs**

The following shows the link between % attendance at school and number of days absent:

- **98% = Fewer than 4 days absent in one school year**
- **95% = Fewer than 10 days absent in one school year**
- **90% = 4 weeks (20 days) absent in one school year**
- **85% = 5½ weeks (28 days) absent in one school year**
- **80% = 7½ weeks (38 days) absent in one school year**

**Over a period of 5 school years, pupils with an average attendance of 85-90% will have missed half a school year of education while pupils with an average attendance of 80% over the same period will have missed a whole school year.**

Our aim is to therefore encourage full attendance for all pupils at All Saints' CE Primary School.

We do this by:

- Creating a warm and welcoming environment
- Ensuring that pupils feel safe at all times
- Developing a strong sense of citizenship within our pupils
- Offering a curriculum that engages and inspires
- Ensuring high quality teaching at all times
- Encouraging, praising and celebrating achievement and success



## Attendance Policy

This policy outlines the process by which parents/carers can request leave under exceptional circumstances for their child/ren. In addition, this policy provides clear procedures regarding absence through illness and the school's response to illness and absence. This policy follows the latest Government legislation and guidelines and Bradford Metropolitan Council Attendance Policy.

### **Section 2: Safeguarding**

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health & Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying
- Children Missing Education

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

### **Section 3: Roles and Responsibilities**

At All Saints' CE Primary School, we are clear that helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility. By working in partnership with parents, carers, pupils and other professionals, we seek to ensure every child has an attendance that meets or exceeds the All Saints' School target of 97%. Outlined below are the roles and responsibilities of key staff within school and how they will help to ensure this target is achieved:

#### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher will provide a strategic lead throughout the school by line managing key members of attendance staff, supporting other school leaders in the effective deployment of resources, ensuring compliance with the policy outlined and having oversight of cases that are being prepared for formal prosecution.

#### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for monitoring attendance of all children. The DSL will also be responsible for data analysis and reporting to the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body. The DSL will meet with the families of children whose attendance is causing concern to understand the difficulties they may be having and to put in place support where it is needed. The DSL, working with the Headteacher, will have the responsibility for ensuring that, where necessary, Penalty Notices are administered fairly and correctly.

#### **Phase Leaders**

Phase Leaders will have an overview of attendance and priorities within their key stage. Alongside the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, they will be instrumental in identifying attendance trends for both individuals and cohorts of pupils. Alongside this, Phase Leaders will be responsible for identifying barriers to attendance and will develop and implement strategies to help pupils overcome these barriers. Phase Leaders will be integral in ensuring attendance remains a priority for staff and children within their phase and will do so through regular communication, sharing of data, supporting difficult cases and rewarding excellent attendance as well as improvement.



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### Teachers

It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure the register is done within the first ten minutes of each morning and afternoon session. Class teachers will support the Phase Leader in using data to identify concerns, recognise barriers to attendance and plan to overcome them.

### Office Team

The Office Team play a critical role in the management of absence through illness, leave or other means. They are the key point of contact between home and school and will ensure contact is made in all cases on the first day of absence.

Once registers are completed by teachers on ARBOR, the Office Team will verify any anomalies and investigate any unknown absences. In the first instance contact will be attempted with Priority 1 and if no answer is given they will proceed to work down the priority list. If no contact is made the Office Team will inform the DSL and a home visit may be actioned.

It is the responsibility of the Office Team to ensure that all Leave of Absence forms are completed by parents/carers, signed by the Headteacher and recorded and saved on ARBOR. It is also their responsibility to ensure that any Penalty Notices are requested following Bradford Local Authority's guidance and report children missing in education when necessary.

The signing of pupils in/out of school is also the responsibility of the Office Team. The relevant information is noted on both class registers and on ARBOR.

The DSL monitors attendance under 90% on a weekly basis and liaises with the Headteacher to identify any cases which cause concern and may require additional support. This is in turn discussed regularly at SLT meetings. Any communication/correspondence sent to parents/carers regarding attendance is logged on Child Protection Online Management System ("CPOMS").

### Section 4: Supporting Attendance

In order to support high attendance, we record two attendance sessions a day (AM and PM) and report on student attendance at fixed periods throughout the year. Each morning and afternoon, we ensure registers are completed and that all children are accounted for as this is a key part of our safeguarding protocols. Pupils who we feel need to improve their attendance will be set targets and supported in identifying barriers to attendance and, wherever possible, removing or overcoming these barriers.

Attendance data will be used to plan for effective strategies, analyse the impact of the school's work and identify priorities and areas for improvement. Data will be used to:

- Inform Governors of school attendance
- Monitor individual absence and lateness to both school and parents
- Identify persistent absentees
- Identify any children missing education – follow Bradford procedures for reporting
- Identify patterns and trends in attendance and punctuality
- Identify pupils who should be celebrated for high attendance or significant improvement



### Section 5: Managing Absence

#### Term Time Absence and Requests for Leave

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission due to exceptional circumstances)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, **not** the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in “exceptional circumstances”. The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

#### Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent’s or child’s rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.



## Attendance Policy

- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a child's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Application for Leave of Absence from School forms should be submitted at least 14 days prior to commencement of leave.

### Fixed Penalty Fines

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) will result in a referral to the Local Authority School for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing. Further information about penalty notices can be found at the following link <https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/penalty-notice>

### School Responses to Absence

At All Saints' C of E Primary School, we value great attendance and work in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure every child is accessing their education. As with every school, and in line with DfE guidance, we make a distinction between 'authorised absence' and 'unauthorised absence'. Below are some examples of both, but please be aware this list is not exhaustive:

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised absence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medical appointment</li><li>• Family bereavement</li><li>• Religious observance (2 days max)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unexplained absences</li><li>• Family holiday in term time</li><li>• Truancy</li><li>• Birthdays</li></ul>

Our responses to non-attendance are evidence based and intended to be implemented at the point of most impact. Below are the key stages for parents and carers to be aware of:

**95% +** Attendance is positive and a cause of celebration

**90% - 95%** Attendance **must** be improved. School will actively monitor attendance and consider what support can be offered to ensure attendance improves. Parents will receive a letter outlining the concerns and action that is needed.

**<90%** A child with below 90% attendance is considered by the DfE to be a "persistent absentee". Attendance is a serious concern. Parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Headteacher.

Although we are aware that there are times absence may be inevitable or unavoidable, we commit to undertaking a thorough risk assessment process for cases under 90% to ensure that our decision making is fair and consistent.



## Attendance Policy

**Appendix 1 Late letter (Code L)**

**Appendix 2 Late letter (Code U)**

**Appendix 3 Absence Letter**

**Appendix 4 School Attendance Meeting Letter**

**Appendix 5 School Letter Warning re: Penalty Notice Referral**

**Appendix 6 Unauthorised absence confirmation of PN request**

**Appendix 7a Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)**

**Appendix 7b Response to Leave Request submitted retrospectively (Not Authorising)**

**Appendix 8 Unauthorised leave confirmation of PN request**

**Appendix 9 School letter where they believe a holiday was taken**

**Appendix 10 School Referral Pathway**



## Attendance Policy

### Appendix 1

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

«dates\_of\_lates\_before»

Total lates before registration closed: «total\_lates\_before» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at 08:50 am and at 1:00 pm.

A child's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## Attendance Policy

### Appendix 2

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code U):

«dates\_of\_lates\_after»

Total lates after registration closed: «total\_lates\_after» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at 08:50 am and is closed at 9:15 am for the morning session and taken again at 1:00 pm and closed at 1:15 pm for the afternoon session. Children arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## Attendance Policy

### Appendix 3

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions / days that «forename» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was absent.

A child's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «forename»'s attendance. If we can help in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## Attendance Policy

### Appendix 4

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re: «forename» «surname»**

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. «forename»'s attendance at school is currently «percentage\_attendance»% which means «he\_she» has missed «total\_authorized\_absences» half day sessions for authorised absence and «total\_unauthorised\_absences» half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in «forename»'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for ?? at ?? It is important that you and «forename» attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

??

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and «forename»'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## Attendance Policy

### Appendix 5

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

At our school we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that «forename» has been absent from school for a total of «total\_unauthorised\_absences» unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices:

<https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/penalty-notices>

*On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.*

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

If further unauthorised absence occurs you will be contacted and invited in for a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## Appendix 6

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Re «forename» «surname»**

With reference to our letter dated ??, «forename» has now reached a total of «total\_unauthorised\_absences» half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result we will now be requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## Appendix 7a

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

### **Request for leave during Term-Time**

**For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»**

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



**Appendix 7b**

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Request for leave during Term-Time**

**For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»**

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## Appendix 8

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**Name: «forename» «surname» DOB: «date\_of\_birth»**

With reference to our letter dated ??date, the leave of absence taken between ??date and ??date has now been recorded as Unauthorised Absence and as a result a Penalty Notice has been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher



## Appendix 9

«addressee»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances. ***(State why you are treating this absence as a family holiday and/or why there are no exceptional circumstances)***

Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school session a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of this Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay this penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher