



Everybody Learns - Everybody Cares

# **Bede Community Primary School's Attendance Policy**

**Review Due – October 2023**

## **1. AIM**

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential as it allows pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

At Bede Community Primary School we recognise the very strong link that exists between a pupil's level of attendance and their achievement. We therefore ask for 100% attendance, and aim for at least 96%.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school, and the Headteacher, staff and Governors at our school work together with children, parents, and other agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

Our attendance policy applies to all children registered at this school and is made available to all parents on our school website.

## **2. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and Regulations of 2006 and 2010 parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly which means being at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is authorised by the Headteacher.

The school is required to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Parents are expected to contact school to inform them of the reason for their child's absence. The school will judge whether or not the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence and mark the register accordingly.

## **3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Parents**

Under education law (section 576 of the Education Act 1996) a parent is defined as:-

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has responsibility for the care of a child or young person. This means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent.

It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the pupil that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

Parents should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy and work closely with school staff to overcome any problems which may affect their child's attendance.

They are expected to notify the school promptly on the designated attendance telephone number if their child cannot attend and any absence will be recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

Parents are discouraged from making medical or dental appointments during school time, and are only expected to remove their child from school for the minimum period of time when this is unavoidable.

### **School**

Bede Community Primary School will encourage and value high levels of attendance. However,

we recognise that many factors (in school and externally) can influence a pupil's attendance and will work in partnership with parents, and other relevant agencies to resolve any issues.

The school will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with pupils and their parents and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

### **Pupils**

Pupils will ensure that they attend school regularly, on time, and will not leave the school without permission.

## **4. REGISTRATION**

Registration will be carried out twice a day. It is important that pupils arrive on time for registration as late comers cause disruption both to themselves and other pupils.

Morning registration is at 8.55 and the registers will close at 9.30.

The registers will be marked promptly at these times and should a pupil arrive after the start of registration but before the registers have closed he/she will be recorded as late (L) for that session. If a child arrives late, parents will be required to register the child at the main reception.

## **5. ABSENCE**

All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Should an explanation for an absence not be received or should the explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Pupil registration requirements

There are four broad classifications in attendance registers:

- Present – the pupil is on the premises at the time of registration.
- Approved Educational Activity – the pupil is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site, for example, educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.
- Authorised Absence – an absence authorised by the school which includes illness, medical appointments, bereavement or other circumstances where the school deems attendance to be inappropriate.
- Unauthorised Absence – an absence where the school judges that the pupil does not have good cause to be missing from school. This includes action by parents who initiate or collude with unauthorised absence by pupil. For example, shopping trips, day trips, birthdays, or absence to look after someone else.

Parents should contact the school on the first day of any absence and on every third day during the absence period. The school will then decide whether or not the absence will be authorised.

## **6. PUNCTUALITY / LATENESS**

Arrival before the registers have closed will result in a late mark being recorded in the register (L).

Arrival after the registers have closed without an acceptable reason will result in an unauthorised absence mark (U) and counts as an absence for that school session.

Pupils who arrive at school late should not be admitted to class until they have signed in at reception. This is important for health and safety reasons.

If a pupil is regularly late parents will be contacted and the pupil will be put on attendance report.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed can result in the school referring the matter to the Local Authority for formal action to be taken.

## **7. FIRST DAY CONTACT**

The Family Support Worker will carry out the first day contact. This will involve telephoning or emailing all parents whose child is absent but has not contacted school with an explanation.

There will be occasions when school staff will make home visits when there are concerns about persistent, sporadic or unexplained absence.

## **8. LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS**

Amendments to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** make clear that Head Teachers 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.

### **A leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.**

The Headteacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact.

The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made at least two weeks in advance and the Headteacher may invite the parent into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

If the request for a leave of absence is refused and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Headteacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued against the parent.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies.

Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.

## **9. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING ABSENCE AND LATENESS**

The school closely monitors individual pupil attendance and where there are concerns about poor attendance the school staged response will be implemented.

The staged response includes:-

- First day contact
- Discussion about attendance with the pupil (if age appropriate)
- Contact with the parent by telephone or letter to ensure they are aware of the attendance concerns
- An invitation for the parent to meet with the Headteacher/senior member of staff to discuss attendance concerns

- A home visit by the Family Support Worker
- A request for medical information from parents advising them that further absences will not be authorised without such information.
- Use of School Governor Panels
- Completion of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) to identify additional support needed
- Referral to outside agencies where appropriate

## **10. ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY**

Once school strategies have been tried but there is no improvement in the pupil's attendance, the school may decide to refer the matter to the Local Authority for formal legal action. This can result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in Magistrate's Court.

The fixed penalty fine is £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days and if the fixed penalty is not paid, the case may proceed to the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failure to ensure your child's regular school attendance.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court can result in a fine of up to £2500, a Parenting Order, a Community Order, or imprisonment.

## **11. ATTENDANCE DATA**

A range of attendance data will be collected and analysed each half term in order to identify individual pupils or groups of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern:-

- whole school attendance rates
- numbers and proportion of persistent absentee pupils
- rates of unauthorised absence
- attendance/absence rates for particular cohorts and groups (year groups, gender, ethnicity, SEN, etc.)

Attendance data will be used to set a range of attendance targets for the whole school, for identified cohorts and for individual pupils.

## **12. COMMUNICATION**

The Bede Community Primary School's Attendance Policy will be communicated through:

- the home-school agreement

- regular bulletin items
- guidance and advice in the staff handbook
- school website

### **13. EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis by the School Attendance Team.

Date of next review: January 2022