



**Heaton St. Barnabas' CE (VA) Primary School**

**Policy For**

# **Attendance and** **Punctuality**

**This policy was approved by Curriculum Committee**

**On: 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**Position: Chair of Curriculum Committee**

**This policy will be reviewed in Summer 2022**

# Heaton St. Barnabas' C.E. (Aided) Primary School **Policy for Attendance and Punctuality 2020**

## Covid-19 and Attendance Expectations

In March when the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was increasing, we made clear no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school. Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term.

This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
  - schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
  - the school's ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating We now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high.

Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. You should note however that:

- a small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

- if rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be advised to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent.
- some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, they should access remote education provided by the school. School will monitor engagement with this activity.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised. 3 Attendance and Covid-19 Symptoms In order to continue to work together to minimise the spread of Corona Virus (COVID-19) school will implement measures to minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school. Staff will work with families to ensure that pupils, staff and other adults do not come into the school if they have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or have tested positive in the last 7 days, and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the school day is sent home.

If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow 'stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection', which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus

(COVID19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms. If a child is awaiting collection, they will be escorted to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, with appropriate adult supervision. School will provide reassurance until a parent or carer has arrived. If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they will use a separate bathroom. Staff caring for the child while they await collection will be wearing PPE. Parents must support school and the community by taking any symptomatic child for a test at the earliest opportunity. Parents must work with school to communicate in a timely fashion should any member of their household test positive for coronavirus. Parents must make the school aware if they have received a track and trace text or call so that the school can seek advice and guidance from public health.

## **POLICY**

### **Why is good attendance important?**

Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and the best schools will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places at risk, and in some cases, it can lead to pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. (Department for Education)

The school aims to provide an environment which is welcoming, friendly and caring and to maintain high expectations of behaviour and achievement. In order to achieve these aims, all school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually. Parents/ Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually.

From the term following their fifth birthday all children are legally required to attend school for 190 days each academic year unless they are unable to attend through illness or other exceptional circumstances. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure breadth and balance; therefore the full 190 days in school are essential for children to receive their full entitlement to education.

The school has rigorous procedures for identifying poor attendance. Where attendance is found to be unacceptably low the school will take all possible steps to improve attendance to ensure that all children have the best possible chance of making good progress and achieving the outcomes that they are capable of.

### **Aims of this policy**

1. To ensure that the attendance of all children is the best it can be to support maximum progress and attainment for all children
2. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils in the interests of children's safety and welfare
3. To develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance related data.

## Registration

Each day is divided into two sessions and an attendance register is completed at the start of each session. (Education Act 1956, Regulation 3)

Session times for Heaton St. Barnabas' Primary School are now staggered to take into account of the COVID restrictions.

Year Group	Drop / Pick up Entrance	Start Time AM	End of Day Time PM
Reception	Rossefield Road Main Entrance	8.25am	3.00pm
Year 1	Rossefield Road Main Entrance	8.35am	3.00pm
Year 2	Village Hall Playground Entrance	8.40am	3.10pm
Year 3	Village Hall Playground Entrance	8.45am	3.10pm
Year 4	Village Hall Playground Entrance	8.50am	3.15pm
Year 5	Rossefield Road Main Entrance	9.00am	3.15pm
Year 6	Rossefield Road Main Entrance	9.10am	3.20pm

Children arrive and go straight into school through their own entrances at their allocated staggered time.

**Please Note: Children who are late disrupt the start of the day for all children in their class as well as miss valuable learning introductions themselves.**

Children who are late should be brought into school by a parent./carer through the main entrance their name will be recorded on InVentry (an electronic signing in system).

When all registration is complete office staff contact all parents of all absent children who have not contacted school. Parents/carers are contacted by text or direct phone-call.

The text list is checked for delivery of messages. Where the message has not been delivered, staff do their best to contact parents by direct call or land line to verify a reason for absence. Admin staff amend registers for all children whose parents reply to text messages and phone calls. Where there is no reply staff will make all reasonable effort to contact parents or carers.

Where a child is not present at the time the register is taken they will be marked absent. If a child arrives after this point they will be given a late mark. The number of times a child arrives late will be recorded on the child's school report. Where a child regularly arrives after registration the Parent /Guardian will be contacted by the school. If the situation persists and the pupil becomes identified as persistently absent the issue may be referred to BCL intervention attendance consultancy team working with the school to support families to improve attendance.

## Reporting absence

It is parents' responsibility to inform the school when their child is absent and to give a reason for the absence.

If a child is unable to attend school parents should

- Telephone the school office on the first day of absence as soon as possible and no later than 09:30 am giving as much information as is available at that time.
- Inform the school if the absence continues beyond the date given in the initial contact
- Send a signed, written letter/e-mail / text confirming the reason for absence when the child returns to school

If the absence is likely to be prolonged, parents should inform the school so that arrangements can be made for regular contact with school and some work can be sent home if this is appropriate.

## Authorised /Unauthorised Absence

Where the school has been informed of the reason for absence and has agreed that the reason is acceptable or unavoidable, absences are recorded as authorised. If the school deems that the reason is unacceptable and /or the absence was unreasonable or avoidable the absence will remain unauthorised. If a child has four or more incomplete weeks of attendance at school due to unauthorised absence a referral to the Education Social Work Service may be made.

The attendance officer monitors attendance on a daily basis. Where he/she notices a number of absences which remain unauthorised, concerns are passed to the Head Teacher. Parents will normally be informed of our concern by letter initially. If the situation continues, Parents / Guardians will be invited in to school to discuss the problem with the Parental Involvement Worker, Head Teacher and Education Social Worker.

## Rewards and Incentives

The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to attend school regularly and on time.

- Each term the class with the best attendance receives a class treat of their choice
- Certificates for 100% attendance are given out at weekly achievement assemblies
- Children who have attendance of more than 95% throughout the year will receive a certificate at the end of the year
- The class with the highest attendance per ½ term is allowed to come in non-uniform on the last day of half term
- Children with 100% attendance at the end of the year will be rewarded with prizes.

Targets may be set for individual children to improve attendance or punctuality. Certificates will be awarded to children who achieve their targets.

## Religious Observance

In order to promote continuity of learning religious leaders in Bradford made an agreement with the Council in 2004 that, where a religious festival falls on a school day, 1 day of absence could be authorised for religious observance. Any additional days taken around the religious festivals will be unauthorised. No more than 3 days in any school year may be authorised for religious observance

Parents should inform school in advance if their child will be absent for a day of religious observance.

## Leave of Absence

The latest legal pupil registration regulations state that leave of absence may only be granted by the school where an application has been made in advance and the head teacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

**In the interest of continuity of children's education, governors at this school have decided that leave of absence will not be granted for any holidays or visits to relatives abroad taken in term time.**

Where parents consider that there are exceptional circumstances they should discuss this with the school as soon as possible to request authorisation.

## Family Support and Intervention

In order to support the families and school the school buys into BCL Consultancy attendance team. The team works with the attendance officer and safeguarding team to establish families who are in most need of intervention. These targeted families are then followed upon via home visits and support intervention via the BCL team. These welfare visits enable families to understand the importance of children attending school regularly and identify barriers to a child's poor attendance. Reports are provided to the school headteacher and attendance officer following the welfare visit.

Any pupils whose attendance falls below 85% are registered to receive the intervention support

## Fixed Penalty Notices

After 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence the school will inform the Local Authority who will write to parents and issue a fixed penalty notice. If there is further unauthorised absence within 20 school days of this notice a fixed penalty fine will be issued. The fine for unauthorised absence will be £60 per child, per parent.

**In cases where leave of absence has not been authorised but the leave has been taken regardless, parents are advised to note that all absences will be unauthorised. If the absence exceeds 10 sessions (5 days), Education Social Services will be informed and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.**

**After 20 days of unauthorised absence the child's name will be removed from the school's roll.**