



**St Bonaventure's Catholic Primary School
Egerton Road,
Bishopston
Bristol,
BS7 8HP**

Attendance Policy

Policy Owner	S Ballantine
Reviewed by	Board
Last Review Date	December 2025
Next Review Date	Term 2 2026

This policy is available at
<http://www.st-bonaventures.bristol.sch.uk/>



Commitment to Equality:

The Trust and its schools are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

"Rooted in faith, we ignite a love of learning, foster inclusive education and empower every individual to achieve their utmost potential."

At the Newman Catholic Trust, we stand united in our unwavering mission to nurture a transformative educational experience, where every child is seen, valued, and cherished as a unique gift from God. Rooted in faith, we ignite a love for learning that awakens curiosity, sparks imagination, and fuels a lifelong journey of discovery.

Guided by the teachings of Christ and inspired by the profound wisdom of our namesake, Saint John Henry Newman, we strive to foster a community where inclusion is lived, diversity is embraced, and every individual is empowered to fulfil their highest potential. As Newman said, *"To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."* We believe that education is a sacred journey of continual transformation—intellectually, spiritually, and personally. We believe that true education is not just about knowledge, but about shaping hearts and minds, cultivating resilience, and nurturing the whole person.

Our vision is simple yet profound: To be a beacon of **Hope** and **Excellence**, where pupils are not only academically accomplished but spiritually enriched and personally inspired to make a difference in the world.

In all that we do, we seek to embody our Trust's **HEART Values**, which define who we are and guide how we serve:

- **Hope** – Believing in the boundless potential of every child, and striving to build a future filled with possibility, courage and faith.
- **Excellence** – Pursuing the highest standards in learning, leadership and love, so that every action reflects our calling to greatness.
- **Authenticity** – Living truthfully and faithfully, ensuring our words, actions and decisions are grounded in integrity and the Gospel.
- **Responsibility** – Caring for one another and for creation with compassion, stewardship and a deep sense of duty to the common good.
- **Truth** – Seeking wisdom and understanding through Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Together, **Heart to Heart and Hand in Hand**, we build communities of faith and learning where every child flourishes — intellectually, spiritually and morally — for the greater glory of God.



Key contacts

- Sarah Ballantine (Principal)
- School office - 01173532830

1. Part A - Policy:

1. Introduction

1.1 It is the aim of St Bonaventure's School that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils.

The school strives to consistently deliver excellent educational experiences for pupils, improving their life chances and serving the communities of which we are a member. Regular, consistent and good attendance is a core component of this drive to deliver excellence.

2. This policy should be read in conjunction with existing trust-wide and school policies including (but not limited to) the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Exclusions and Suspensions Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#). These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 - (which consolidate and replace earlier pupil registration regulations)
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2024

The DfE's guidance on the [school census](#) explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled; acting early to address patterns of absence and creating a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents¹ must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school will encourage parents of Reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform



the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory² school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. We want our pupils to go to school every day unless they are really not well enough to attend. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular. We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

Please see DfE guidance documents '[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015](#)', '[Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013](#)' and '[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)' – or ask the school office for a copy.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community and across the Trust.
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

2.1. Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate learning sessions missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

The school understands that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with them, their parents and partner organisations to remove barriers, by building strong and trusting relationships. Therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business.

The principles of a 'support first approach' are adopted and we seek to:

Support first approach	
Expect	Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
Monitor	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
Listen and understand	When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



Facilitate support	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
Formalise support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.
Enforce	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

4. Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. **Patterns of persistent absence, severe absence, or repeated unexplained absence will be treated as potential safeguarding indicators and responded to in line with the school's child protection procedures.** Therefore, in line with government guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information).

If a pupil is not attending as required, where the school deems it appropriate, staff may make home visits to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers as part of the school's safeguarding and attendance processes. If staff are unable to see and speak to the pupil and parents/carers, they may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family, who they reasonably expect may be able to provide the school with relevant information.

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#).

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.



Reduced timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access fulltime provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- the school/trusts' strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,

Part B - What the Law Says and Our School Procedures:

1. Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Where deletion is made because the pupil has left the school, the school will follow the notification requirements to the local authority as set out in the Regulations.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date, they are a legal document. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

2. Contents of Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil. Please refer to Working Together To Improve School Attendance for the code descriptors and also appendix 1 of this document. The school must record whether each pupil is:

- Attending
- Absent

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguard children, improve attendance and is supported by the use of our electronic Management Information System to record attendance information. Our registers will be retained for 6 years from the date after the last entry was made.

Attendance and absence codes

3. Attending the School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present (/ \) if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time.

This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Principal will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.



Our pupils must arrive by 8:50am on each school day.
Our morning register is taken at 8:5am and will be kept open until 9:10am
Our afternoon register is taken at 1:20pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm
Our register is kept open for 20 minutes.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed 9:10am they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (**U**) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly.

See DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

3.1. Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

4. Attending a place other than the school

Pupils are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session. These codes include:

- Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip
- Code P: Participating in a sporting activity
- Code W: Attending work experience
- Code B: Attending any other approved education activity
- Code D: Dual registered at another setting

Our school retains responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. Our school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Our school should ensure that we have in place arrangements whereby providers notify the school of any absence. Our school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow-up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provider (AP).

5. Absent – Leave of absence



A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' which means the pupils absence is with permission granted by the school. These codes include:

- Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code X: Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to attend school
- Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school-age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
Where code C2 is used, it will only be applied where a time-limited part-time timetable has been agreed, documented and is subject to regular review with the aim of full-time reintegration.
- Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

5.1. Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

5.2. Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school-age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

5.3. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. ***Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.*** The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the



absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and The HOPE Virtual School/the relevant local authority virtual school head. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the HOPE Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

6. Absent – other authorised reasons

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence'. These codes include:

- Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code R: Religious observance
- Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

The school will ensure it meets its duties to arrange suitable education from the relevant day for suspensions and permanent exclusions, in line with statutory guidance.

6.1. Mobile pupil - Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The Education Act 1996 includes specific reference to the school attendance of children "of no fixed abode". This law applies when a child is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent/carer "who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require [the parent/carer] to travel from place to place". This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent.

The DfE Working together to improve school attendance guidance explains that a number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

6.2. Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise **one day's absence for a day** exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be necessary, they should be requested in advance using the leave of absence in term time process. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances, will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

6.3. Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.



The school follows Department for Education guidance which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence, we will endeavour to have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

If a pupil is absent due to illness or any other reason, parents/carers should notify the school of the absence as early as possible. This should be before 8:30 am on the day of absence and include the specific reason ('unwell' is not sufficient). Parents/carers can notify the school by phone, using the telephone number 01173532830. If you are asked to leave a voicemail, please include the pupil's full name, date of birth and year group. Parents/carers can also notify the school by email or by a personal visit to the school office (via an adult). The school may contact parents/carers to discuss a pupil's absence in more detail.

In some cases, the school may require parents/carers to report absence in a different way – if this is the case, the school will contact parents/carers to explain this requirement.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out using the InVentry screen. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

6.4. Suspensions (previously called Fixed-Term Exclusions)

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the Principal.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the HOPE Virtual School (BRISTOL ONLY) /the relevant local authority virtual school head. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out in the InVentry screen. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

7. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):



- Code Q: Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
- Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

8. Absent - unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence was provided.

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. See 'Penalty Notices and Prosecutions' section for more information.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not and this will be taken in line with national guidance and attendance expectations.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Haircuts
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised
- Parent/carer's or sibling's illness (unless very exceptional circumstances apply and have been agreed in writing by the school)

As noted above, unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. The unauthorised absence codes include:

- Code G – Holiday not granted by the school
- Code N – Reason for absence not yet established
- Code O – Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code U – Arrived in school after registration closed

9. Administrative codes

Where necessary and applicable, our school will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admissions register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure

10. First Day of Absence Response

If a child does not attend school on any given morning and we have not received a reason for their absence the front of house member of the office will send a text message before 9.30am asking them why their child is absent. If the parents/carers do not reply to the text message, they will receive a phone call.

In the case of a child with a Child Protection Plan; a child open to social care; a child previously been reported missing or a child who walks to school on their own, we would not text, we would phone the primary contacts in the first instance. If the parent/carer does not answer and the family are thought to be vulnerable we would conduct a home visit.

Parents will be asked to supply details of at least two people who can be contacted in an emergency,



and these details will be reviewed on a yearly basis through renewal of pupil data packs.

If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may undertake our own 'safe and well' checks and/or request a Welfare Check from the police.

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11. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

The school recognises that rewarding good and improved attendance should be carefully considered in order to ensure it does not make pupils who have poor attendance, feel marginalised, worried or guilty about their low attendance rate; its impact on the pupil's own learning or the learning or rewards for the class as a whole.

The school will regularly review any reward systems to ensure they are not negatively impacting on individual pupils or groups of pupils.

When parents/carers have worked with the school to improve their child's attendance we will acknowledge this with a letter of thanks.

In some cases, a reward chart may be given to a child to encourage them to be punctual and ready to attend school. In this instance, an age appropriate reward is given for a full week of good attendance and/or punctuality.

Every week the class with the highest attendance receives a certificate. Each class who receive this certificate the most times are rewarded with a non-uniform day.

12. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

When the school has concerns about the attendance of a pupil, staff will do their best to make the parents/carers aware of the concerns about their child's attendance in the most accessible way possible, communications will be provided in accessible formats and can be offered in different languages if requested.

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Principal to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a Notice to Improve – attendance warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances, our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.



If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

13. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

The school and local authority will apply penalty notices in line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices, as implemented through the local authority's code of conduct.

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. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's unauthorised absence 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 will result in prosecution.) If a second Penalty Notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period the penalty is £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. There will be no option to pay a lower amount.
2. Prosecution.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or up to 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) for more information and Bristol City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare> or ask the school for printed copies.)

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools.

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

14. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil



Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The school will follow the local authority's guidance and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases.

15. Following up Unexplained Absences

Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parents by text, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 5 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

16. Reporting to Parents

We report to all parents/carers on their child's attendance in term 2, 4 and 6. At the end of the year in term 6 this is included within pupil's annual report.

In addition to these times we will also report to parents/carers when a child's attendance drops below 90%, and/or when a child persistently arrives late to school, for whatever reason, our school will write to the parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

In the instances where pupils continue to have poor attendance and/or punctuality we will remain in ongoing communication with the parents/carers.

17. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

All absences are recorded in the attendance register in the school's MIS (management information system). Information about the reason for the absence, how it was reported and by whom, and any additional information pertinent to the absence may also be recorded.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

Please see Appendix 2

Child-on-child abuse

All pupils have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them physically, verbally, and emotionally both in person and online. There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

The school recognises that a pupil may be reluctant to attend if they are experiencing any kind of child-on-child abuse. The school constantly strives to promote a positive and inclusive culture where all pupils feel valued, have a strong sense of 'belonging' and are fully supported if things go wrong.

The school takes all reports of child-on-child abuse extremely seriously. All incidents will be investigated, appropriate measures will be taken for all pupils involved, including working with and making referrals to external agencies where appropriate.

The school recognises that child-on-child abuse is a rarely witnessed event, and that the most likely source of information will be through hearsay (either direct from the victim, or indirectly through witnesses or parents).

If a parent/carer thinks their child is experiencing child-on-child abuse, or is concerned their child may be involved in child-on-child abuse in any way, they are encouraged to report this to the school as quickly as possible, so that appropriate measures can be taken.

Please see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for more information on how child-on-child abuse is addressed.

Children in Care

Foster Carers do not have parental responsibility for the children in their care, although they are responsible for ensuring their regular school attendance.



If a Child in Care is not attending school, or there are concerns about their attendance, the school will seek advice from the Local Authority's Virtual School and the child's social worker, as well as communicating with the pupil and foster carer.

Disability Related Absence

The school will ensure 'reasonable adjustments' are made for disabled pupils (defined as those with a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'). This may include changes to the physical environment, curriculum or the way information is provided, as well as providing auxiliary aids and equipment, or tailored services.

The school recognises that some disabled pupils may need additional support to attend regularly and that, for some pupils, they may have more absence due to their disability, for example due to attending medical appointments. The school will ensure disabled pupils are not penalised for absence related to their disability and will support the pupil and family to access support from external agencies where appropriate.

Young Carers

The school recognises that pupils who are Young Carers may have caring responsibilities that impact on their punctuality and/or attendance. Where this is the case the school will work with the pupil and family to encourage them to access appropriate support, including direct support from Young Carers and any other support the pupil and family may need; the school will also provide support in school where appropriate.

Parents who live separately

Where appropriate, the school will involve all parents/carers in order to ensure each are aware of their child's attendance pattern and are able to support the child's attendance to improve. Where a child lives with different parents/carers on different days the school will take this into consideration when working with the parents/carers. Communication with separated parents will remain in line with our Separated Parents Policy.

Complex Family Circumstances

The school will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances, the school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The exception to this will be where parents/carers fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies, or fail to implement the suggested changes. When referring for legal sanctions, the school will show that the parent/carer has been warned they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If the school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, staff will share information with other agencies as deemed necessary.

19. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the principal and LGC.

Guidance Documents (include but are not limited to):

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE 2024)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance (DfE February 2023)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupil-s-attendance-guidance-for-schools)

Arranging education for children with who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE December 2023)

[Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/arranging-education-for-children-who-cannot-attend-school-because-of-health-needs)

Keeping children safe in education

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

School census guidance and regulation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-censuses-and-slasc>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>



Children Missing Education Guidance (Bristol City Council 2018) <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme/> / Children Missing Education guidance (relevant local authority, as updated)

Appendix 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance & Absence Codes

Attending	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure



Appendix 2:

The Trust Board

The Board is responsible for approving the Trust's Attendance template policy.

The Local Governing Committee (LGC)

The LGC is responsible for approving local adaptations to the template policy and monitoring its implementation and effectiveness.

The LGC is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the adaptations to, personalisation and implementation of this policy.

The LGC is also responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

The Principal

The principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and meets with families to discuss attendance where appropriate.

The principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs

Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school



Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff

Any Senior Leaders (e.g., Vice Principal or Assistant Principal with Responsibility for Attendance)

The Attendance Team consists of the Principal, Vice Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Officer. They will meet as a team at least weekly to monitor and review attendance across the school – for individual pupils, vulnerable groups and the whole school. During their meetings, the Attendance Team will identify pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and put attendance interventions in place as necessary. Depending on the level of concern, the Attendance Team will involve class teachers and other relevant staff and co-ordinate meetings with parents/carers. Where considered necessary a formal action plan will be produced.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Providing safeguarding support and advice to attendance colleagues as appropriate, including in response to term-time leave requests and CME cases; taking safeguarding action where necessary. Meeting with the Attendance Officer/Team to review the attendance of the pupils on the school's vulnerable list and agreeing any action needed.

Attendance Officer (where relevant)

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence, liaising with the Principal as necessary. (This also includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team.)
- Makes Children Missing Education referrals to the Local Authority where appropriate (this includes liaison with the DSL and Safeguarding Team).

Attendance Administrator (where relevant)

The Attendance Administrator is responsible for ensuring that the daily registers are completed accurately and on time, recording the reasons for absences and reporting any concerns or patterns of absence to the Attendance Team.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

Meeting with the Attendance Officer/Team to review the attendance of the pupils on the vulnerable list/SEND Register and agreeing any action needed.

Class Teachers/Form Tutors

Class teachers are responsible for recording their pupils' attendance on a daily basis for both morning and afternoon sessions, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via the MIS system. Where there are attendance concerns, either raised by the class teachers themselves or by the Attendance Officer, they will 'check-in' with the pupil to find out about any reasons for absence as part of their responsibilities under the Safeguarding Policy. Class teachers may also be asked to meet with parents/carers whose child has a falling level of attendance and is flagged as a concern by the Attendance Team.

Office Staff :

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not



- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every [day/timetabled session] on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Work with the school to be in school as often as possible and strive to achieve their very best every time they are in school.

