

Attendance Policy

St Walburga's Catholic Primary School



Approved by:

Governing Body

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Next review due by:

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Ensuring the whole school team works together in supporting pupil attendance
- We will also promote and support punctuality in arriving to school

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is 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

The designated governor responsible for attendance is Mrs. M. Thomson and can be contacted via 01202 528811 [/office@stwalburgasprimary.co.uk](mailto:office@stwalburgasprimary.co.uk).

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Attending welfare visits
- 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

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- 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
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Veronica Woodward and can be contacted via 01202 528811 /office@stwalburgasprimary.co.uk.

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Headteacher
- Working with Targeting Support Officers from BCP Council to tackle persistent absence
- Attending Fast Track to Attendance meetings when necessary
- Attending welfare visits
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices (as authorised by the Headteacher in line with the Government guidelines)

The Attendance Officer is Miss R Prince and can be contacted via 01202 528811/office@stwalburgasprimary.co.uk.

3.5 Pastoral Support Worker

The Pastoral Support Worker is responsible for:

- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance/punctuality issues
- Liaise between families and SLT/ Class Teachers
- When a pattern is spotted, discuss with and listen to pupils and parents
- Understanding barriers to attendance and agree with families how we can work together to resolve them
- Attending Fast Track to Attendance meetings when necessary
- Attending welfare visits

The Pastoral Support Worker is Mrs. P. Symes and can be contacted via 01202 528811/
office@stwalburgasprimary.co.uk.

3.6 Class Teachers

Class Teachers will:

- › Record attendance on a daily basis, and will submit this information to the school office, by 9.00am for morning registration and by 1.00pm for afternoon registration.
- › Highlight any absence patterns and impacts to pupil's education

3.7 School Office staff

School Office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Register children who arrive late to school
- › Check all registers daily and follow up on any uninformed absences, and will alert SLT if they can not ascertain a pupil's whereabouts

3.7 Parents/Carers

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 on time – gates open at 8.25am and the school day begins at 8.40am
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of 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
- › Make a careful note of term dates and day closures from the weekly newsletter or the website
- › Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority, and attend meetings that they are invited to
- › Seek support where necessary, for maintaining good attendance by contacting their child's teacher or the Pastoral Support Worker, particularly if they have any concerns about their child's attitude to school.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.40am and ends at 2.50pm.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am. Any child arriving after this time will be registered as late. The final deadline for registration is 9.10am – any child arriving late after this time will be registered as an unauthorised late and deemed absent for that session. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.45pm and will be kept open until 1.00pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers should email the school office requesting time out of school for such appointments. Forwarding confirmation emails of appointments or showing a text to the school office is helpful.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. They shouldn't take a whole day off for an appointment, parents can collect their child during the school day to take them to the appointment and drop them back to school afterwards.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence (even if they think it won't be authorised, they must still follow procedure). Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Children who arrive late in school not only miss valuable settling-in time and directions for the first lesson but may also find that their lateness contributes towards their attendance percentage. All children must be in school by 8.40am at the latest. Our gates open at 8.25am, giving you a 15-minute window to drop your children to school on time.

The gates close promptly at 8.40am, when the bell goes, therefore if you arrive at school late, you will need to access the school via the office. A member of the office staff will sign your child in and will ask you for the reason for your child's late arrival at school. Late arrivals to school between 8.40am and 9.10am will be marked as 'late' on the registers. Arrivals to school after 9.10am will be marked down as an 'unauthorised absence'.

The safeguarding and attendance team meet every 2 weeks and pupil punctuality will be monitored. If a child is arriving late regularly, a letter will be sent home and if no improvement the Pastoral Support Worker will contact the family and will see if there is support we can put in place.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's parents/carers, they will then phone the other emergency contacts provided by the parents/carers.
- A welfare visit to the child's home will be undertaken by the Pastoral Support Worker or another appropriate member of staff, to check that the pupil and family are safe if they are unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil. The school will ensure that proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, including contacting the police should contact still not have been made after a home visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where unexplained absences continue, support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate

4.6 Reporting to parents

It's always important for parents to keep track of their child's attendance throughout the academic year. The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via their child's report card at the end of the Autumn Term and Spring Term, and their final report in the Summer Term.

Should the school write to parents regarding their child's attendance or responding to a term-time absence request, the school will inform the parent of the child's most up to date attendance.

The school will report half termly attendance figures in the school newsletter and publish on the school website.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, and a performance license issued by BCP Council
- Attending an interview or transition session at a new school
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. As a leave of absence will only be granted in

exceptional circumstances, it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 10 school days before the absence, in writing, to the Headteacher by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. The request must include an explanation as to why the absence must be taken in term time. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Bereavement or funeral
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Examples of **unauthorised absences** include (but are not limited to):

The law does not allow the following examples as acceptable reasons for absence: -

- Family holidays
- Birthdays or similar family celebrations
- Visits. (Day trips/ theatre visits)
- Parents / carers are not well
- Shopping trips during school hours (even if it is for the child)
- Personal appointments such as visiting the hairdresser
- Truancy

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

See Appendix 2 for further information on penalty notices from the local authority.

6. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

6.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

All staff are aware that some children may face barriers that could affect their ability or willingness to come to school. We will engage in sensitive conversations with children and families and will provide support tailored to the individual needs of the child.

6.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

We will work closely with families, our Inclusion Leader and Pastoral Support Worker to ensure plans are implemented for such individual cases. Regular monitoring and reviews will take place.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7. Promoting and monitoring attendance

St Walburga's Catholic Primary School recognises that good attendance and pupils' enjoyment of school are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. We know that parents value their child's education and have high aspirations for them; hence we are keen to work with them to ensure that their child has good attendance and punctuality in order for them to do well at school.

The Headteacher, Pastoral Support Worker, Attendance Officer, and the governor responsible for safeguarding, meet twice every half term to discuss safeguarding and attendance matters.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level, year group and cohort level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Take part in termly Targeting Support Meetings with BCP Council to analyse our data and discuss individual cases
- Ensure attendance expectations are clear to parents, that the policy is readily available and other attendance news and figures are published to parents throughout the academic year.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- In some circumstances it may be appropriate to invite families to take part in a Fast Track to Attendance Contract. This is a useful tool to set targets and to identify support.
- Invite parents to meetings
- Get in touch with parents via phonecall or letters to inform them of the school's concerns
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

8. Further information for parents

It's important to keep in mind that the government has stated that the expected attendance for a child at school is 96% or greater. This means that each child should aim to have no more than 7.5 days of absence in a complete academic year. It might be tempting to think that missing a day or two won't make a difference, but the table below shows how even a small percentage of absence can add up to a significant amount of lost learning hours by the end of the academic year.

Description	Attendance	Whole days absent over the academic year	Lost hours of learning over the academic year
Excellent	100% - 99%	0 - 2	0-10
Good	98% - 96%	4 – 7.5	20 – 37.5
Requires improvement	95% - 91%	9.5 - 17	47.5 - 85
Persistent Absentee	90% - 86%	19 – 27	95 - 135
Critical	85% - 80%	28.5 – 38	142.5 - 190

Not only are learning hours lost, but also opportunities for social interaction, school trips, visitors to school and time spent with friends are missed. Of course, it's important to prioritise a child's health and well-being, so it's understandable if they need to stay home when they're really unwell. However, it can be challenging sometimes for parents/carers to determine when their child is too ill to attend school. The school recommends parents look at the useful tool in the link below, which offers advice to help them make that decision. Don't forget, children can come to school if they are on antibiotics, if they are well enough, parents/carers just need to complete a request form for the school to administer medication in school, which can be found in the school office and on the school website.

<https://www.what0-18.nhs.uk/parents/carers/worried-your-child-unwell/child-unwell-ok-go-nurseryschool>

If at any point in the year the school has concerns with a child's attendance they will get in touch with the family as outlined above, either by phone or by letter, particularly if a child's attendance falls below 90% and into the 'Persistent Absentee' category. The school's primary goal is to notify parents if their child's attendance level has fallen below expected and to determine if there is anything the child or family requires support with.

If parents/carers need any support or advice or would like to discuss their child's attendance or punctuality at any time, they must not hesitate to contact the school. They are always more than welcome to speak to their child's class teacher, the attendance officer, the Pastoral Support Worker, the school office, or any of the senior leaders. The children's well-being and education are of utmost importance to the school and the whole team will continue to work together to support families to ensure that children attend school regularly, so they can reach their full potential.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum checked yearly. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences from school

Information for parents/carers



Each parent/carer issued with a Penalty Notice has to pay their Penalty Notice fine.

What is the Education Act 1996?

It is an act that gives power to councils, schools and the police to issue Penalty Notices for irregular attendance at school.

Why has this power been introduced?

It is a legal requirement that your child receive an education. Missing school can damage your child's achievements, disrupt the school's routines and affect other children's opportunity to learn. It can also leave children at risk of anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Children go to school to learn and to be in a safe environment.

Who is identified as being a parent/carer responsible for ensuring regular attendance?

In the Education Act a parent is defined as:

- any natural parent
- anyone who is not a natural parent but has parental responsibility for the child
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child (having care of a child means a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child).

What are my responsibilities as a parent/carer?

Unless you can show that you are providing your child with full-time alternative education yourself, you must ensure that your child attends school regularly. You will be committing an offence if your child fails to attend regularly where the school has not given permission for the absence.

Only your child's school can authorise absence.

If you fail to make sure that your child attends regularly at school, you may be prosecuted in court. If convicted, sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months, and you will have a criminal record.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution. It requires the parent to pay a fixed amount as a fine for the child's irregular attendance and avoids a court appearance.

What is the fine?

£80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. If this is a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent are capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid BCP Council will consider prosecution proceedings under s.444(1) or 444(1A) Education Act 1996. If convicted, sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months, and you will have a criminal record.

How are they issued?

A Penalty Notice will be issued by first-class post to your home.

Is a warning given?

You will not receive a warning if you have taken leave of absence in term-time without the school's permission.

For general absence, you must have been warned of the possibility that legal action could be taken if attendance didn't improve. This may have been via letter, or in a meeting, or by issue of a Notice to Improve. The school must have made a reasonable offer to support you and your child prior to requesting a Penalty Notice. Further information is available in the BCP Code of Conduct.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Penalty Notice has been issued, but you can make representation to the School Inclusion Service if you believe the Penalty Notice contains factually inaccurate information and has been wrongly issued.

How do I pay?

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with Penalty Notices.

What happens if I don't pay?

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If the Penalty Notice is not paid BCP Council will consider prosecution proceedings under s.444(1) or 444(1A) Education Act 1996. If convicted, sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months, and you will have a criminal record.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

Yes, your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to secure an improvement in your child's attendance. The School Attendance Support Team at BCP Council can also provide information, advice and guidance.

It is very important that you speak with the school at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about ensuring your child's school attendance.