

**January
2024**



Attendance Policy

(Approved Spring Term 2024)

Signed: [Policy approved during a meeting of governors – Wednesday 24th January 2024](#)

Mrs L Lowndes
Headteacher

Mrs F Boulton
Chair of Governors

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

BALDWINS GATE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Baldwins Gate CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

Our vision statement:

Baldwins Gate Primary School is a Christian school where children, inspired by our Christian values, learn together to be the best that they can be.

Through respect, love and kindness they learn that they are unique and valued and to celebrate the value and uniqueness of others.

⁴ *Love is patient, love is kind.*

⁷ *It always protects, always trusts, always perseveres.*

Corinthians 13

As a voluntary-controlled church school, at Baldwins Gate, we strive to ensure the best possible learning journey for children in our care; encouraging the development of values and attitudes, skills and knowledge, that will release the potential in each individual, for the benefit of others, in an ever-changing world.

As a school community of children, parents, staff and governors, we aspire that our actions and attitudes underpinned by our school values of:

- Individuality
- Community
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Truthfulness

will ensure that the children learn together to be the best that they can be.

Attendance Policy

We believe that children cannot reach their learning potential if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of the children in Baldwins Gate Primary School. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our children. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance. We expect all school staff to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all children are ready to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents and carers is to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Children with Health Needs who cannot attend school Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The **governing board** is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The **headteacher** is responsible for:

- 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
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The headteacher, **Mrs Leanne Lowndes**, can be contacted via email - headteacher@baldwinsgate.staffs.sch.uk and/or via telephone on 01782 680649.

The **School Attendance Officer** is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- 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 external agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is **Mrs Sarah Riley** and can be contacted via email – office@baldwingsgate.staffs.sch.uk and/or telephone on 01782 680649.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via Arbor to the school office each day by 9:15am for the morning sessions and 1:30pm for afternoon sessions.

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day 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

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend school punctually
- Ensure that they are prepared for the school day

Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

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

A day counts as two attendance sessions: 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 whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

If a child arrives after the register has been taken in class, they must enter school via the office where they will be marked as Late (L) up until 9:30am. Arrival after this time will be registered as a 'U' and the child will not receive an attendance mark for the morning session.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school outside the normal school day are signed in or out from the school by using log book located in the school office.

Registers are checked regularly by our Attendance Officer to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to form part of the school's absence monitoring.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The reason for the amendment
- The date and/or time on which the amendment was made

When completing the register, we follow the DFE school attendance guidance to determine which relevant code to use: <https://gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age (5 years+), whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if 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 three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Arrival and Registration

The school gate opens at 8:45 am each school day. Pupils must arrive in their classrooms by 8:55 am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00 am and pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in the classroom by this time. The register closes at 9.15am. Pupils who arrive after 9.30am will be registered as a 'U' and will not receive an attendance mark for the morning session.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm (Nursery and Reception) and will be kept open until 1:15pm. The register for Key Stage 1 and 2 (Years 1 to 6) will be taken at 1:10 pm and will be kept open until 1:30 pm.

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 9:00 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff. There is a dedicated absence line where voice messages to report attendance can be left.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.

Planned Absence

Medical Appointments

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. Confirmation of medical appointments should be provided.

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.

If a child arrives to school late, due to a medical appointment, they will receive a medical mark (M). This is an authorised absence. However, the child will not receive a register mark for this session

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.

Family Bereavement

The school will work closely with, and be sympathetic to, the needs of the child and their family.

Religious observance

If you are planning to take your child out of school for religious observance, we ask that you inform the school at least one week prior to the religious holiday.

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/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will seek to go on a home visit before seeking advice or guidance from external agencies, eg contacting the police, ESAS (Educational Safeguarding Advisory Service)
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will update parents on their child's attendance at parent consultation meetings as well as on the end of year report.

Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Headteacher will **only** grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '**exceptional circumstances**'. In these limited 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, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website https://www.baldwingsgate.staffs.sch.uk/uploads/3/7/4/6/3746144/request_for_leave_form.pdf or by contacting the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Legal Sanctions due to Absence or Lateness

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absences or is late 10 times over a twelve-week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The Process for Monitoring Attendance

The school aims to achieve at least 96% attendance each year. To help with this, we monitor attendance regularly. The school has established a system for monitoring attendance and lateness, the purpose and aims of which are as follows:

- To improve the overall percentage of attendance and improve pupils' punctuality at school
- To make attendance and punctuality a high priority for all those associated with school
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance and punctuality related data
- To develop and implement an effective system of communication between school and home
- To reward good attendance and punctuality
- To work effectively with the Local Authority and other agencies that support attendance and punctuality

The School Attendance Officer monitors attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. This data is analysed to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance. The analysis will then be used to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.

Reducing Persistent Absence and Lateness

In a half term, where attendance falls below 90% or a child is late 5 times or more, the following procedures are applied:

- Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will write to the parents/carers.
- If the concerns persist, the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carers, and Headteacher.
- If there is still no improvement, the school will make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Team at the Local Authority to deal with the on-going issues.

- The Local Authority may issue a Penalty notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DFE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the Headteacher and School Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Appendix 1 – Attendance Colour Codes

96% - 100%
Well Done!
This is Excellent Attendance

91% - 95%
Very Good, but Improvement is Needed
Children in this group are closely monitored by the
Attendance Officer and the Headteacher

90% or below
Very Serious – Persistent Absence Pupil
Parents with children in this group could be prosecuted

Appendix 2 – Education Penalty Notices – information for parents

Education Penalty Notices

Information for Parents

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children go to school regularly. The local authority can now issue Penalty Notices if a parent fails to make sure that their children receive the education they deserve. This leaflet tells you about these notices.

School Attendance and the Law

Any absence from school is a cause for concern. Only by attending every day will your child have the best chance to get the most from their education.

The Headteacher at your child's school must decide whether to authorise an absence. That is to agree that there was a legitimate reason for your child not to be in school.

There are only four legitimate reasons for absence:

- Religious observance
- Illness of the child
- The death of a close family member
- An urgent medical or dental appointment

The Targeted Services Division can take legal action against you if you fail to make sure that your children go to school regularly and there is no legitimate reason for the absence. This action might take one of two forms:

- The issuing of a Penalty Notice
- Prosecution in the local Magistrates Court

This information is about Penalty Notices and how the Local Authority will issue them.

What they are

Penalty Notices are fines, issued by the Targeted Services Division, for a child's unauthorised absence from school.

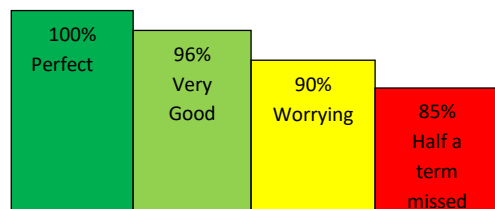
The service will always consider legal action when there is no legitimate reason for absence.

How they will be issued

Notices will be issued by post. They will not be issued during a Truancy Sweep or as part of a meeting with parents

Missing School Means Missing Out

This graph shows the effect of missing time from school over a year. Every school session is important if your child is not going to fall behind. The Local Authority will not take legal action if previously poor attendance is now improving. Instead they'll monitor the case and support the pupil. If attendance doesn't improve, or if absences begin to increase the Local Authority will re-assess the case to see if legal action is needed.



Further information

If you have concerns about your child's education you should, initially, discuss these with school. If you would like further information about Penalty Notices, please contact the District Team Manager, of the Local Support Team, telephone number: - 01782 296290.