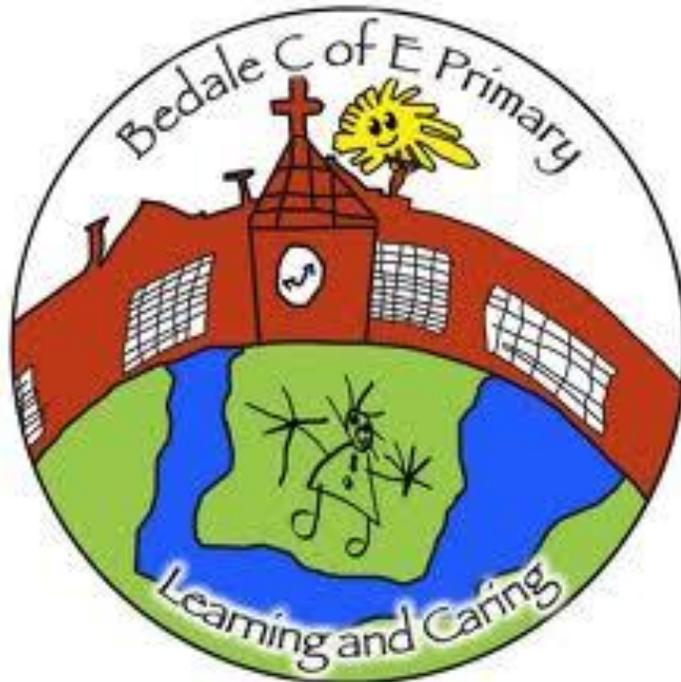


# BEDALE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



## PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of Agreement December 2018

Date of Review: December 2019

Responsibility: Governors Behaviour & Health & Safety Committee

## INTRODUCTION

Bedale C of E Primary School recognises the importance of full attendance and aims to ensure that all pupils achieve and maintain high standards of attendance.

Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and therefore is a priority for the school. Bedale C of E Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils.

100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent/carer inform the school of the reasons for absence.

## WHY?

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents/carers, together with school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
  - Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
  - Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

## **AIMS OF THE POLICY**

To promote regular attendance and therefore offering all pupils equal access to learning.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

- Meet/exceed the Government attendance targets set for us.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.
- This policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and therefore be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

## **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance outcomes.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school, initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.

- To report to the DfE on attendance three times a year via the school census.
- To report to the Governing Body and Governor responsible for attendance on a half termly basis.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily, at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To promote good attendance.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To have children in class ready for morning registration and teaching of the first lesson at 8.55 a.m each day.
- To inform school on **every** day of any absence.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's 'Leave Of Absence Form', stating the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and attendance officer and head teacher to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

## **THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

- The school Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Head Teacher. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:
  1. Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home.
  2. If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers.
  3. If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer.

4. If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer, a school representative and the Local Authority will be notified.
5. If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Prevention Service to deal with the on-going issues.

Should concerns persist the Prevention service will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action. See *Appendix 1*.

## **ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

*Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.*

*Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.*

AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents/carers will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised via a letter sent through the royal mail postal service.

There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.

## **LATENESS**

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

Children must be in class by 8.55 a.m. each day for morning registration. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after registration has taken place (8.55am-9.05am). Registers close at 9.05am. If children arrive after this time then they must come into school via the main office, where they will be manually marked as present by a member of the school admin team.

If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.05am, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence (late after registers have closed) although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents/carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping.

If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Attendance Officer or Head Teacher.

## **SICKNESS**

Please notify the school, before 8.55 am, on each day of the absence.

We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

## **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

We celebrate good attendance throughout our school by:

- Awarding a certificate to the class with the highest attendance, if there isn't one with 100% attendance, each half term.
- Awarding individual certificates and prizes to individual children who have 100% attendance for each half term.

- Awarding certificates and prizes to individual children who get 100% attendance for the whole academic year (September to July).
- Publishing school attendance in our fortnightly newsletter.
- Encouraging pupils to be involved in their own attendance monitoring in Collective Worship, e.g by School Council announcing the best children from each class.
- Rewards for vulnerable groups with much improved attendance.

## **THE ROLE OF THE PREVENTION SERVICE**

The Education Prevention Service strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that “if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence.”

North Yorkshire County Council, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice, when requested by a Headteacher, can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

- At least 10 sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, or 20 sessions (ten school days) in the previous 4 months
- Other than in specific circumstances, the parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement. Within the 15 day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.
- No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year.

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- Issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence
- Issue a Penalty Notice without warning

# Bedale Church of England Enhanced Mainstream Primary School



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North Yorkshire  
DL8 2AT

[www.bedaleprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.bedaleprimaryschool.co.uk)

**Headteacher: Mrs E Turnbull**

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**School Telephone: 01677 422401   EMS Telephone: 01677 458269   Fax: 01677 458266**  
**E-mail: [admin@bedale-ce.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:admin@bedale-ce.n-yorks.sch.uk)**

Dear Parents/Carers

## **GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION REGARDING LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

The Department for Education requires Local Authorities to implement government amendments to the regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term time, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. The law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Therefore Headteachers will only be able to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and this will still be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right. The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance of a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Headteachers will also welcome early discussion with you around potential applications.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional'.

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or children's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter.

Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. When a headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which does not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

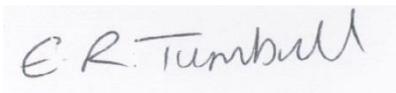
Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Amendments to 2007 Penalty Notice regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices in line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecution if the fine is not paid.

I would reiterate taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt your child's educational progress.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. R. Turnbull". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light grey rectangular box.

Mrs E Turnbull  
Headteacher



# Bedale Church of England Enhanced Mainstream Primary School

## **APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and at least 10 days before the first date of the period of absence being requested.

Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission before making any bookings for holidays in term time.

Absence from school during term time means that children miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. Before completing this application, parents/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child’s continuity of education.

Name of Pupil:..... Class Teacher:.....

Address: .....  
.....

I request permission for my child to be absent from school.

My child will be absent from school from .....(date)

My child will return to school on .....(date)

Total number of school days my child will be absent .....

Reason for application: .....  
.....  
.....

Signature of parent/carer: .....

Date: .....

### **For School Use Only**

Number of holidays taken to date:..... Percentage Attendance:.....

Decision reached: Authorised/Unauthorised

Decision reached by: .....



# Bedale Church of England Enhanced Mainstream Primary School

## **APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME**

### **REPLY**

Name of Pupil:.....

Your son/daughter has been granted leave of absence for ..... Days

Starting ..... and returning on .....

### What the law says about school attendance

Parents are responsible for making sure that their child attends school regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly the Local Education Authority may take action against you in the Magistrate's Court (Magistrates can fine parents up to £2,500 or impose a custodial sentence. Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order). Alternatively, the Local Education Authority can issue a penalty notice (currently £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days).