



Pupil Attendance Policy

St Petroc's CE Primary School

October 2024

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

Our School Mission Statement

Through God's love and lessons, we care, share and grow together

Our School Vision

Bring it!

Our School Values

Courage, Creativity, Friendship

1. Introduction

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. The foundation of securing good attendance is that the school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

2. 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

3. Legislation and guidance

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

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 School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

This policy also complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Board and governors

The board/local governors take an active role in attendance improvement, supporting the school to prioritise attendance, and work together with school leaders to set whole school attendance cultures. This includes:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents.
- Recognising that attendance improvement does not happen in isolation and therefore ensuring it is prioritised in wider improvement strategies, such as raising attainment, behaviour, special educational needs and disabilities, wellbeing, and safeguarding.
- Ensuring a link governor focuses on attendance.
- Governing body identifying and monitoring attendance patterns across the school to identify common issues and barriers and shares effective practice between schools.

School

We recognise that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

attendance in school. Their responsibilities include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.

Senior leader responsible for strategic approach to attendance	Miss Claire Chapman chapman@stbarnabasmat.com
School staff who parents should contact about attendance on a day to day basis Attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. This includes a named attendance officer and parent support adviser who works with families and conducts home visits.	Attendance Team pet.attendance@stbarnabasmat.com Sheila Jackson (parent support advisor) sjackson@stbarnaabasmat.com Senior leadership team via pet.admin@stbarnabasmat.com

- Attendance is a standing item at St Petroc's S.L.T meetings.
- We ensure that attendance is recorded accurately in the register and share the required information with DfE and LA
- We recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. Members of the Attendance Team are also part of the school's Safeguarding team.
- Ensure high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils. This includes those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of school processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance

School staff

The attendance leader ensures that:

- staff 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

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

intensive support to pupils who need it.

5. Responsibility of Parents

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Parents are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day on time

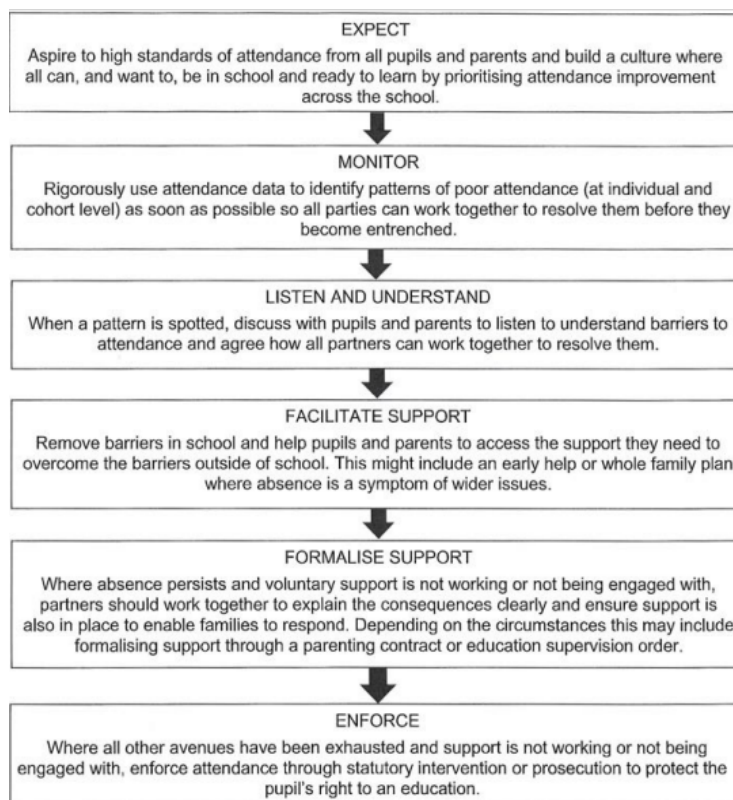
Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

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

Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting our attendance team.

6. How the school will work with parents to improve attendance



St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

7. Recording attendance

The law requires all schools to have an admission register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the admission register and have their attendance recorded in the attendance register. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined. *(based on DfE working together to improve attendance)*

The school must take an attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. *(based on DfE working together to improve attendance)*

At St Petroc's we take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once after lunch at the beginning of the second session.

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

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

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		

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

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

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays
---	------------------------------	--

8. Timings of the school day

St Petroc's school day begins at 8.45am. The site and doors open at 8:30am and gates are locked at 9am. Children arriving after 8.45 am are marked as late. Children arriving after 9:10am are marked as an unauthorised absence.

9. Responsibility of parents/carers

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible.

To report an absence please call 01208 72526 and press option 1 or email pet.attendance@stbarnabasmat.com or dojo the Attendance Team.

Parents should not dojo or directly message class teachers.

Children arriving after 8.45 must sign in at the main office with their parent/carer and record the reason for being late.

10. Day to day processes

We will:

- contact parents on the first day of absence where a reason for absence has not been provided. If absence continues without explanation, further contact will be made to ensure safeguarding is in place.
- identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents (and where appropriate foster carers and/or social workers) to understand why and when the pupil will return.
- where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code will be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- hold at least two emergency contact numbers for each pupil.
- make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of our regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategies for improving attendance.
- regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. We will avoid headline percentages and instead make this understandable for parents (e.g. the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
- hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

- make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- inform a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences from school.
- set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels e.g newsletter and dojo.
- visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life e.g. displays, assemblies or in registration periods. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.

11. Granting leaves of absence

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence.

The School will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. As head teachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. *(based on DfE working together to improve attendance)*

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, outweighing the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another but the normality will be that requests for authorised absence will be refused.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils 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
- Enabling service families to spend time together where a parent has been deployed away from home

Parents wishing to take their child out of school for any reason, must complete an exceptional leave form. This can be downloaded from the website or requested from the school office.

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

Medical appointments

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. 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 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.

12. Persistent and severe absence

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), the school and EWO will work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. The school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school) are classified as severely absent pupils. They may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of agencies. This may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by the school, LA, and other agencies, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. The school and LA will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.

13. Legal interventions

Absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing. The school will always work together with other agencies e.g social care, family workers, EWO to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

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

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.

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

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, are not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

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

14. Strategies for promoting attendance

We promote attendance in the following ways:

- Regular monitoring of attendance in order to support where absence is high
- Popcorn parties for individual classes with the best attendance
- An attendance officer/team to build home school relationships and support where necessary
- Work with other agencies, such as Early Help, Family Support Workers, EWO etc
- Letters home when attendance becomes a concern
- Report to parents on individual child's attendance within annual school report

St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust

- Reminders on school newsletters