



**Wycliffe Church of England Primary School**

# **Attendance Policy**

Approved by the governing body: 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020

To be reviewed: Jan 2022

## **Vision Statement**

We nurture an aspirational family of hard-working, respectful individuals who work collaboratively to have a lifelong love of learning.

“Life in all its fullness” (John 10:10)

*Our vision is to ensure that our school family are happy and fulfilled in a creative learning environment. This is flexible and caters to individual needs while developing a life-long love for learning through which all members can flourish. We nurture an aspirational family of hard-working, respectful individuals who work collaboratively.*

It is the policy of our School to celebrate achievement and attendance. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. We aim to give a clear, consistent message that “Every Day Counts,” and will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our School will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We will ensure that our guidelines are prominent in our induction procedures and throughout school so that families and young people have a clear, consistent message from school regarding:

- Absence and attendance codes
- Extended leave
- Religious observance
- Medical Matters
- Lateness

## **Aims**

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

## **Being at school**

School education lays the vital foundations of a child’s life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment.

Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Parents have responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school on time and are picked up on time at the end of the school day.

## **Expectations**

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- attend school every day;
- attend school punctually.

### **We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities and follow this guidance in referring to illness and attendance;
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school on each day of absence before 9:00 am whenever their child is unable to attend school;
- attempt to make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours and be prepared to show evidence of appointments made during school time;
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

### **As a school we will:**

- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns;
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality;
- provide clarification for attendance and punctuality issues via parents' evenings and on our newsletters – this will provide easy reference for expectations re vomiting and diarrhea for example;
- monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality. Attendance will be monitored weekly for any emerging patterns below 95%. Parents will be routinely contacted if attendance falls below 90%.
- Contact parents on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. (Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence). In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested. Engage the local PSO if we feel a child is unaccounted for.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition. Discrete rewards will also be given for individual pupil's improved attendance or punctuality.
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils via Parents' Evenings and reports;
- ensure the Headteacher's termly report to Governors records the attendance figures for the academic year to date;

- make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly and follow up with a series of communications which will be logged and reported on; should it be necessary after school intervention has not proved successful, refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to CSC/Early Help. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by these bodies may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

## **Punctuality**

Lateness is not acceptable as it disrupts lessons and may lead to more serious absence. Punctuality is a life skill which must be taught and encouraged.

Wycliffe follows DfE guidance which states that schools should close the register to pupils 30 minutes after the start of the session.

- Start and finishing times of registration: our doors open at 8.45am. A pupil arriving after 8.50am will be marked as *Late*. A pupil arriving after 9.15am will be marked as *Absent*. Guidance is given to staff on the accurate completion of registers.

### **We apply the following coding:**

- **L is used if a child arrives after the register has been called, but within 30 minutes of the start of the school day**
- **U is used if a child arrives more than 30 minutes after the start of the school day.**

Issues with lateness will be followed up and reported on by our pastoral administrator. Learning hours lost due to lateness will be highlighted via our attendance board; improvements will be publically acknowledged on a whole school basis and to individuals discretely.

## **Requests for leave of absence**

This policy reflects the DfE regulations which came into force in Sept 2013 which state:

‘Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.’

From 1 September 2013 an amendment to the 2006 regulations removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments made clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It also made clear that Headteachers would determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. There is no specific definition of ‘exceptional circumstances’ and it is for Headteachers to determine exceptions and apply this consistently.

- Time off for family holidays is not a right and we expect parents to take their family holidays in the normal school holiday periods.
- If requesting leave of absence in term time a request form, available from the school office, must be completed. Each request will be assessed individually and parents will be informed in writing whether the request has been accepted or refused.
- We will not authorise absences for pupils with less than 85% attendance unless a doctor's note is provided. If a pupil has 10 unauthorised sessions, equivalent to 5 school days within a 6 week period then parents will also be liable for a Penalty Notice.
- Penalty notices may be issued if parents have not sought permission or the request has been refused. Wycliffe C E Primary School will do so, where necessary, in line with DfE guidance. The Penalty Notice is for £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. This fine is not received by the School it is retained by the Local Education Authority. Failure to pay the penalty could result in Bradford Children's Services starting legal proceedings against a parent for the offence of failing to ensure a child's regular attendance at school.

### **Religious Observance**

We recognise the value of school attendance and of community cohesion. It is essential to take account of religious observance and the impact of its recognition on community cohesion when setting school holiday patterns.

**We attempt to:** Consider flexibility available from occasional days and disaggregated staff training days to enable parents to celebrate Eid without affecting children's attendance at school as the school population changes where ever possible.

### **Children at Risk of Going Missing From Education**

There is general agreement that some children who have experienced certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education. These include:

- young people who have committed offences;
- children living in women's refuges;
- children of homeless families perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast;
- young runaways;
- children with long term medical or emotional problems;
- unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees or children of asylum seeking families;
- looked after children;
- children with a Gypsy/Traveller background;
- young carers;
- children from transient families;
- teenage mothers;
- children who are permanently excluded from school.

School will receive an email every Thursday from Bradford Council indicating the number of missing pupils who have been added to the Out of School Register each week. There is an expectation that school will check the Out of School Register on a regular basis to establish if any missing children have been admitted to school. The online Out of School Register provides the means to inform Bradford Council electronically if we have admitted a missing child.

### **If A Child Goes Missing**

If a child in school stops attending and we believe they may have left the area and details of a new school and a new address have not been provided, The Education Social Work Service can assist in trying to trace this child. There is an expectation that school will have made 'reasonable enquiries' to establish the whereabouts of the child prior to referral to the CSC.

By definition 'reasonable enquiries' could include:-

- checks with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with;
- checks with the pupil's friends, siblings, and known relatives at the school and other schools;
- telephone calls to any numbers held in the school records;
- a visit to the last known address.

In the case of a missing child school will need to make a Children Missing Education referral to the LA via web based pro-forma which will be accessed via a secure log in on Bradford Schools Online.

### **Statutory Requirements**

All schools (including independent schools) are required to:

- inform their LA in every circumstance when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the admission register;
- inform their LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school (where they can reasonably obtain this information); and
- provide information to their LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school (again where they can reasonably obtain this information).