

St Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School



Attendance Policy 2023

Rationale

St Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each child to realise their true potential to let their light shine. All staff work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late. Irregular and persistent absence and lateness can have a significant impact on pupil progress and achievement.

We believe the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school, to this end; we strive to ensure our school environment is safe, welcoming and happy.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents and carers are encouraged to take an active role in school life and support their child's / children's learning. We share the children's attendance records during parent / teacher appointments and as part of our annual written report to parents / carers.

The aim of this policy is to provide clarity around the issue of attendance:

- inform parents / carers of their own legal responsibility, expectations and school policy
- encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality
- support teachers and senior leaders in promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality
- provide clear procedures

Punctuality

It is important that children arrive for school punctually to ensure a calm and purposeful start to the day. The School day begins at 8.50am with registration, with doors opening at 8.40am. Children that come into school after this time will need to sign in.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by the office team. All absences and persistent lateness

are investigated. When the register closes, the office team checks the messages.

Absence

All parents / carers are asked to contact the school by 9am if their child is absent on the first day of absence with the reason by phone - 01788 542610, letter, email to admin3213@welearn365.com, text to 07584490372 or in person, ideally before 9am. Please try to make appointments out of school hours whenever possible. If no notification is received about a child's absence, then a member of the School's Administration Team will phone / text the child's parents / carers to establish the reason for the absence. We can conduct welfare checks / safety home visits to check on the welfare of the children.

In line with clear guidelines set out by the authority, parents / carers of pupils at St. Matthew's Bloxam school and Nursery can expect the following:

- To be given an array of different ways that parents / carers can contact the school to make school aware of absence. These will include the school email address, the school mobile number, enabling parents to text into school, and the school phone number whereby parents can either leave a message with a member of staff on, or leave a message on the answer machine.
- Follow up calls to be made to parents / carers of children that are not in school and no reason is offered. This can be in the form of a telephone call or a text.
- Attendance monitoring to be continuous and on-going allowing for school to raise concerns quite quickly with parents / carers.
- Any concerns immediately dealt with, and parents / carers are contacted, via either phone call, email or letter.
- Support to be offered to families with attendance and or punctuality issues. Including Early Help, referral to school nurse etc.
- To expect that attendance and punctuality be dealt with using a consistent system.
- Referred to Warwickshire Attendance Service and the educational social worker should parents not engage or improvements not take place.
- To be reminded of the importance of good punctuality and attendance via letters and newsletters.
- **All unauthorised absences and attendance below 95% will be referred to Warwickshire Attendance Service.**

Parents / Carers are expected to:

- Inform school at the earliest opportunity that their child is going to be absent from school or nursery, by 9am.
- Not to make medical appointments during the school/nursery day. If they have to be during the school/nursery day then school/nursery will be given plenty of notice and provided with a medical card or letter.
- Work with school or nursery staff to sort out any difficulties impacting on attendance or punctuality at the earliest opportunity
- Not take children out of school for holidays, and if time does need to be taken in exceptional circumstances this will be applied for with 6 weeks' notice. Any proof of exceptional circumstances can also be handed in at this time. e.g. Medical evidence, official letters from place of work, Calendars of religious events.

Leave of absence

The Government have issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding 'Leave of Absence'. The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Head Teachers **Shall not** grant **any** leave of absence during term time **unless they consider** there to be **exceptional** circumstances relating to application.

Parents / Carers do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if leave is granted.

Applications for leave of absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by fixed penalty notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of the Education Act 1996.

Each application for leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis, and on its own merits.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing, on a leave of absence form, which are available at the school office.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ ***Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily – for example, shopping day, birthday day, hair appointment.***
- ❖ ***truancy before or during the school day***
- ❖ ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ❖ ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***

Parents / Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips, birthday celebrations, etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments supported by a medical card/letter.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Why attendance matters:

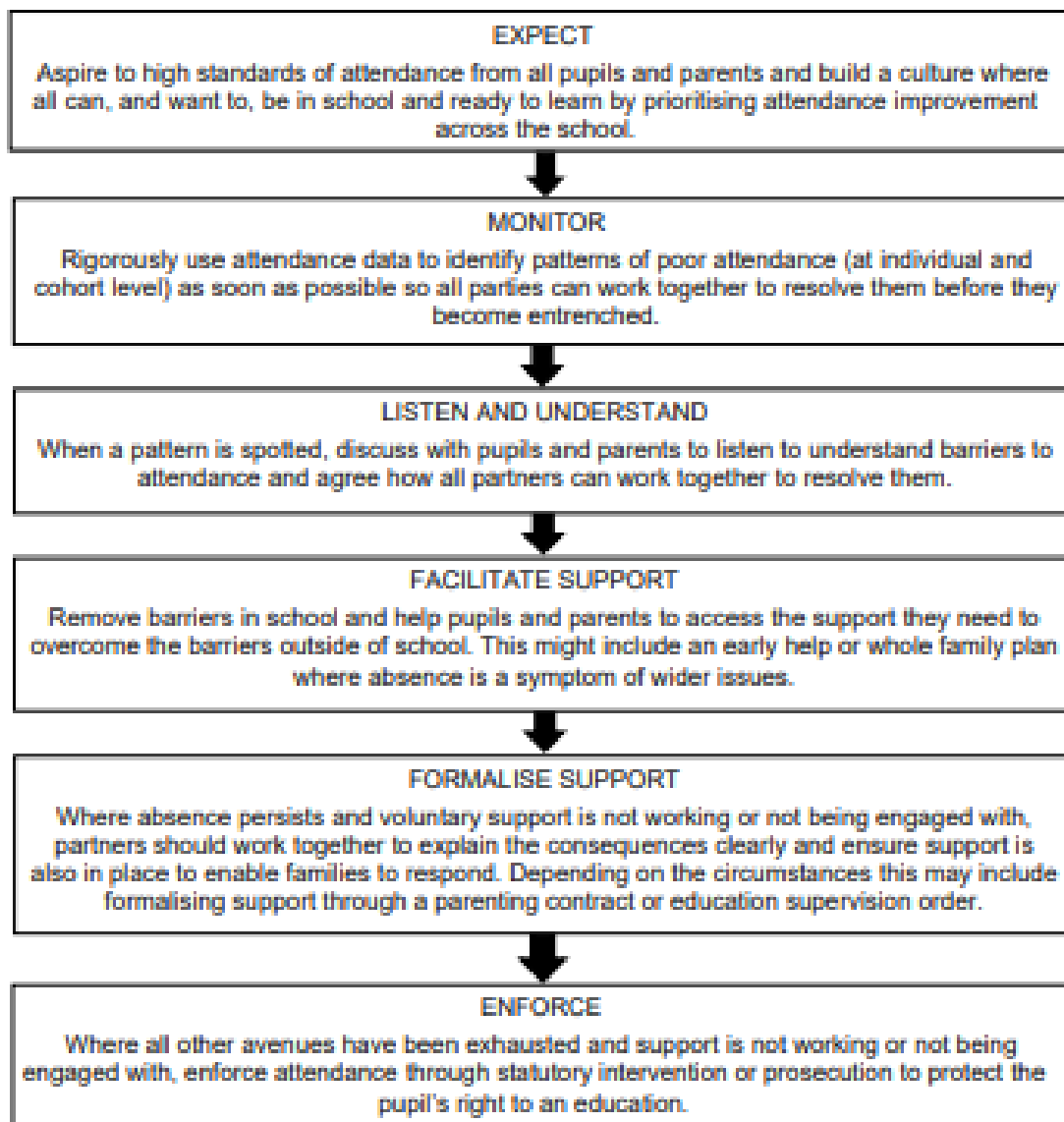
- ❖ Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
- ❖ 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- ❖ 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- ❖ 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance
- ❖ If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

At St. Matthew's Bloxam C E Primary School, the staff and Governors endeavour to support parents and carers by:

- ❖ Providing an environment in which pupils feel welcomed and valued. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken
- ❖ Making every effort to match learning tasks to pupils' needs
- ❖ Collating attendance data half termly and analysing it in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice
- ❖ Parents/Carers will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school portal, parents' evenings etc.) of the importance of good attendance
- ❖ The Headteacher will make a termly report to governors on attendance
- ❖ The Headteacher, SENDCo and Learning Mentor may liaise with other agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing difficulties
- ❖ Secondary schools make links with the school and the Year 6 pupils to help with a smooth transfer to their school. Discussions will identify those pupils who may require extra support during this process.

Working Together with Warwickshire Attendance Service to Improve Attendance

We are working together with Warwickshire Attendance Service to improve attendance and all partners work together to:



Monitoring Attendance

Attendance is monitored initially by a member of the school's admin team. The attendance lead oversees the monitoring process. Any issues identified concerning absence, illness or lateness will be addressed by the Attendance Lead by letter, telephone or meeting with strategies put in place to improve attendance. Attendance letters will be sent out half termly to children with an attendance below 95%.

Staged Approach

Stage & Team Member Responsible	Trigger	Outcome
HT, SLT, Class Teacher, Support Staff, Learning Mentor	Attendance is around the whole school target and the child's attendance is of concern.	Class teacher to contact parents/carers: • Express concern about emerging attendance concern • Advising of current attendance figure • Outline gaps in learning and/or attainment due to absences • Welcome parents / carers to discuss attendance • Record conversation on CPOMS Attendance is monitored for a fixed period of 4 weeks.
Stage 1 Attendance lead	Attendance falls below the whole school target of 95% and the child's attendance is of concern.	Letter 1 will be sent to parents/carers: • Expressing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of current attendance • Enclosing a registration certificate • Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence' • Welcoming the parents to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further. • Record conversation and documents sent, on CPOMS Attendance is monitored for a fixed period of 4 weeks.
Stage 2 Attendance lead and Learning Mentor	Parents / Carers have received a Stage 1 letter and attendance remains of concern.	Letter 2 will be sent to parents/carers: • Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of current attendance • Enclosing a registration certificate • Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence' • Notifying parents / carers that the child's attendance is being monitored and of the duration of the monitoring period. • Pastoral team to make contact with parents/carers, to gain further insight into the absences, and offering support. • Welcoming the parents/ carers to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further. • Record conversation and documents sent, on CPOMS Attendance is monitored for a fixed period of 4 weeks.
Stage 3 Attendance Lead and Learning Mentor	Parents / Carers have received a Stage 2 letter and attendance remains of concern.	Letter 3 will be sent to parents/carers: • Informing parents / carers of ongoing concern about attendance • Informing the parents / carers of current attendance • Enclosing a registration certificate • Reminding parents / carers of their legal responsibilities and the definition of 'persistent absence'

		• Requesting that the parents / carers provide medical evidence of absence for illness, to enable the school to consider the authorisation of absence. Meeting with parents/carers and potentially child: • Inviting parents to an appointment with the Attendance and Pastoral Lead on a specific date, with the purpose of discussing attendance, agreeing an action plan of support, considering whether it may be appropriate to involve outside agencies, and setting an internal school attendance target. • Notifying parents/ carers that should they chose not to attend or be unable to attend, the meeting may take place without them and a target set. • Action Plan to be created and shared with parents/carers. Agreeing timeframe on when attendance is to improve, clear and achievable targets that support both the child and the parents/carers. • Offering Early Help as a framework to capture household issues and support with school attendance. • Agree a review date with parents/carers. • Record conversation and documents sent, on CPOMS
Stage 4 Attendance Lead and Learning Mentor	Parents/ Carers have failed an internal school attendance target and attendance is below the level of Persistent Absence (90%)	Letter 4 will be sent to parents/carers: • Informing parents / carers of ongoing concern about attendance and unmet targets from review meeting. • Informing the parents / carers of attendance during the target period. • Enclosing a registration certificate • Notifying parents / carers that the school intends to discuss their child's attendance with the Warwickshire Attendance Service Team. • Parents/carers to provide evidence of medical appointments, time off with illness to confirm reasons for absence. Meeting with parents/carers and potentially child: • Inviting parents to an appointment with the Attendance Lead and Learning Mentor on a specific date, with the purpose of discussing attendance, reviewing the current action plan, agreeing further targets support, considering whether it may be appropriate to involve outside agencies, and setting an internal school attendance target. • Notifying parents / carers that should they chose not to attend or be unable to attend, the meeting may take place without them, and a target set. • Action Plan to be created and shared with parents/carers. Agreeing timeframe on when attendance is to improve, clear and achievable targets that support both the child and the parents/carers.

		• If declined at previous stage, offering Early Help as a framework to capture household issues and support with school attendance. • Agree a review date with parents/carers. • Record conversation and documents sent, on CPOMS
Attendance Lead and Learning Mentor	During a monitoring period, attendance improves.	A Letter of Praise will be sent to parents / carers: • Informing the parents / carers of attendance during the monitoring period. • Notifying parents / carers that the school will continue to monitor attendance to ensure sustained improvement.

Roles and responsibilities

Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- Holding school leaders to account for improving pupil attendance and punctuality.

Head teacher

The head teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the policy is adhered to.
- Prioritising key actions to address pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Reporting to governors on all key aspects of pupil attendance and trends.

Attendance Lead and Team

The Attendance Lead and Team is responsible for:

- Monitoring and tracking pupil attendance and punctuality.
- Sending out attendance records and letters to inform parents of attendance, see staged approach for details.
- Arranging meetings and support to improve children's attendance and punctuality.
- Attendance team includes Mrs Helen Francis and Mrs Claire Jones.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school and nursery. The staff at St. Matthew's Bloxam, are committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Approval Date: September 2023

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years' time (Autumn 2026) or before if there is a significant change in Government policy.

