



St. James' Blackburn
CE Primary School

Vision Statement

Guided by our Christian Values we endeavour to inspire, cherish and serve our school community. We strive to be exceptional in all we do. We will nurture a love of all God's children. We seek to build respect for all faiths and beliefs.

'Serve one another in love' (Galatians 5.13)

Mission Statement

Together we value, inspire and develop each other within a happy, safe community based on Christian values and respect for other faiths.

'Show respect to everyone'

(Peter 1 2.17)

LOVE

'Serve one another in love'

(Galatians 5.13)

RESPECT

'Show respect to everyone'

(Peter 1 2.17)

COURAGE

'Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.'

(Joshua 1.9)

School Attendance Policy

Date Agreed by Governors: 28th March 2019

Governor Review Date: 28th March 2021

School Vision

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School Mission Statement

Together we value, inspire and develop each other within a happy, safe community based on Christian values and respect for other faiths.

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School Values

The school has nine school values, underpinned by 3 core Christian Values of:

Courage

'Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.' (Joshua 1.9)

Love

'Serve one another in love' (Galatians 5.13)

Respect

'Show respect to everyone' (Peter 1 2.17)

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1 Introduction

1.1 At St James' Church of England Primary School we are committed to helping all children thrive and achieve.

1.2 St. James' believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. The school works closely with children, staff, parents, governors and the Education Welfare Officer to promote procedures for good attendance.

1.2 St. James' values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

1.3 St. James' recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. The Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by the policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

2 Legal Framework

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

2.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

2.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:

- / - present am
- \ - present pm
- B- Educated Off Site (not-dual register)
- C- Other authorised circumstances
- D -Dual Registration
- E -Excluded
- G- Family Holiday Not Agreed
- H- Agreed Family Holiday
- I- Illness
- J -Interview
- L- Late before register closes
- M- Medical appointments
- N -No reason yet provided
- U- unauthorised absence
- P- Approved sporting activity

- R- Religious Observance
- S -Study Leave
- T -Traveller Absence
- U- Late after registration closes
- V- Educational Trip of Visit
- W- Work Experience
- X- Non Compulsory School Age Absence
- Y -Unable to Attend due to exceptional circumstances
- - all should attend /no mark recorded

3 Categorising absence

3.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

3.3 Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

3.5 **Illness:** In most cases a telephone call or note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill is acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. If reasons for absence become a concern, School has the authority to challenge the reason given. If no evidence is provided, School has authorisation to mark absence as unauthorised.

3.6 **Medical/Dental Appointments:** Parents are strongly advised to make routine medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Routine appointments will not be authorised. Any emergency medical appointments during school hours, parents are asked to bring their children's appointment card into school which will require approval from Extended Leadership Team. Hospital appointments should be requested at least 1 week in advance. A copy of the appointment letter is requested for ELT to authorise. The administration team will confirm authorisation.

3.7 **Other Authorised Circumstances:** this relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package. See Discretionary Leave Policy for further information.

3.8 **Excluded (No alternative provision made):** Exclusion from attending school is counted as an unauthorised absence and recorded as 'E' in the register. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

3.9 Discretionary Leave: Please refer to Discretionary Leave Policy.

3.10 Religious Observance: St. James' acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance, such as Eid-ul-Fitr and Diwali.

3.10.1 Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

3.10.2 However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

3.11 Traveller Absence: A number of different groups are covered by the generic term traveller – Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus People, Bargees (occupation boat dwellers) and new travellers.

3.11.1 Code T - This code should be used when traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other absence by these groups.

3.11.2 To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and should be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of their requirements to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

3.11.3 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

3.11.4 When in or around Blackburn, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

3.11.5 St. James' will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at St. James' will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

3.11.6 St. James' can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

3.11.7 St. James' will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

3.11.8 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school

- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service.
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

3.11.9 Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

3.12 Late Arrival Registration begins at 8.40am, pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 9.10am, pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (U), this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

3.12.1 On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure responsibility for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

3.12.2 The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

3.12.3 The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

3.13 Unauthorised Absence: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

3.13.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Leave taken without the authorisation of school (see Discretionary Leave Policy).

4 Deletions from the Register

St. James' will follow Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's guidance for deletion of pupils from the registers and BWD's Children Missing Education Protocol.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

St. James' believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and wider school community.

As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents through regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer

- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- School attendance targets are submitted to the Local Authority within an agreed timescale, which can be linked to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through Headteacher Reports at Governing Body Meetings and Senior Leadership Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, School and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

5.1 The Leadership Team and Class Teachers will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address issues of attendance with support from the School Pastoral Leader
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through the termly reporting to the Governing body.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implanted
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and pattern of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi – agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Documents interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.2 Parents will encourage children to attend school regularly by taking a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress. Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.

5.2.1 Parents should contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.

- Routine appointments are made for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, but where this is unavoidable; parents must fill in a discretionary leave form.

6 Using Attendance Data

6.1 Pupil's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

6.2 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

6.3 The designated ELT member will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

6.4 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR.

6.5 Every fortnight the School Support Assistant will collect data on all those children with less than 95% attendance and persistent absence threshold of 90% for the year. They will ascertain the reasons for the absences, either by getting the information from the school office or by ringing the parents.

6.6 The School Pastoral Leader will, along with the designated ELT member, look at the attendance printouts for the identified children to see if there are any patterns emerging, for example, particular days which a child may be having off.

6.7 If no reason for an absence can be ascertained, a letter will be sent informing the parents that unauthorised absences will count against them should they wish to apply for discretionary leave for their child and that the Inclusion Officer will be informed of the unauthorised absences.

6.8 If unauthorised absences continue School will ask for the Inclusion Officer to make contact with parents.

6.9 If unauthorised absences continue, the parents will be invited to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting where targets will be agreed upon.

6.10 Classroom teachers will be provided with percentages of class attendance for regularly in order to alert them of falling attendance.

6.11 Class teachers may be informed of attendance and punctuality for the week in KS1 or KS2 and rewards may be issued.

6.12 Referrals can be made to other agencies for example, the school nurse, if it is thought this would help with attendance issues.

7 Support Systems

7.1 School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

7.2 St James' also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain attendance, for example, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

7.3 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with Parents
- Parenting contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time- tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages
- Common Assessment Frameworks

7.4 Support offered to families will be centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, St James' consider the use of legal sanctions.

8 Legal Sanctions

8.1 Prosecution where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

8.1.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

8.1.2 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

8.2 Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

8.2.1 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

8.2.2 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

8.2.3 Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.

8.3 Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty notices will be considered when

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has below 95% absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

8.3.1 A Penalty Notice gives the parent/carer the opportunity to discharge their liability for the period/episode in question if a £60 fine is paid within 28 days or £120 if paid within 42 days of the date the Notice was issued.

8.3.2 Failure to pay the penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Penalty Notice protocol.