Attendance Policy

St Barnabas & St Philip’s Church of England Primary School
We are committed to ensuring that all pupils’ school attendance is as high as possible and that where there is absence it is closely monitored. Parents have a legal responsibility and duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. The school will work in partnership to ensure that parents are supported in fulfilling their legal responsibility. These expectations are clearly explained to parents throughout their child’s time at the school, including Reception New Starters meetings, annual ‘meet the staff’ meetings and regular parental consultations.

Clear guidance and training is provided to staff to ensure that school registers are kept properly and are regularly monitored by the Headteacher, who has overall responsibility for attendance and punctuality throughout the school.

Punctuality
As a school we are sympathetic to occasional situations that are beyond parental control and result in pupils arriving late. However, arriving late to school does have a detrimental effect on a child’s education. It is unsettling for the child and causes disruption for the staff and the other children. It is important that good habits are set for later life and that parents are prepared to make a commitment to their child’s education and to the school. The Headteacher will regularly undertake ‘late watches’ at the school entrance to encourage parents and pupils to be on time at the start of the school day.

All lateness is recorded as “L” in the register with the time of arrival and reason recorded as an electronic note linked with the pupil and specific date.

In compliance with the DfES guidelines, registers will be closed 30 minutes after they are taken and children recorded as late if they arrive during this time. If they arrive after this time it will be considered as an ‘unauthorised lateness’ (e.g. doctor/dental appointment).

An authorised lateness will be recorded in the register and follow-up procedures will be pursued if it occurs frequently or with any regularity. In order to standardise policy across the LA, principles have been agreed whereupon:

- Registers are opened at 8.55 a.m.
- registers are not called after 9.05 a.m. and registers are closed by the Class Teacher
- pupils arriving between 9.05 a.m. and 9.25 a.m. are marked as late and the number of minutes late is recorded using the ‘minutes late’ feature within SIMs attendance module
- after 9.25 a.m. marked with a ‘U’ (Late after register closed and an electronic note attached with circumstances and number of minutes late).

When a pupil’s punctuality is identified as an issue by any member of staff, the Headteacher/Educational Welfare Officer will contact the parents outlining the concerns and
possibly requesting the parents arrange to meet with the EWO & Headteacher to discuss any problems associated with ensuring the child arrives on time to school. Subsequent letters will lead to further discussion with the E.W.O to resolve the difficulties.

**Illness**
In the case of illness, parents are asked to telephone the school before 9:25 a.m. on the first day of absence and follow-up with a covering letter on the child’s return. The teaching staff are encouraged to take up any concerns regarding unexplained absences with the Headteacher or Deputy. Should there be no explanation for an absence the Headteacher is informed so that the appropriate follow-up can take place.

When pupils are off school due to prolonged illness the school liaises with parents as to the individual child’s progress and, where appropriate, will provide work.

**Authorised absence**
Certain types of absences will be treated as authorised and are as follows:

- illness.

Other absences may be authorised by the Headteacher or in their absence by the Deputy Headteacher. Parents are required to give the school advanced notice of the following types of absence using the school’s ‘Application for leave of absence during term time’ form

- medical and dental appointment – we encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours;
- days of religious observance;
- interviews for a place at another school and entrance examinations;
- family bereavements;
- special occasions;
- public performances;
- authorised absence during term time with the prior agreement of the HT – **only authorised in exceptional circumstances**.

Parents should not normally take pupils out of school during the term. Each request will be considered individually, taking into account the age of the child: the time of the year: its nature and parental wishes: the overall attendance pattern of the pupil: the child’s stage of education and progress. A return date will be agreed and any extra time taken will be recorded as unauthorised absence unless there is a good reason for the continued absence. If a child is not back in school by the agreed time, and if no contact has been made, the school can remove the child from the Register after 10 school days have elapsed unless there are unavoidable circumstances.

**Term Time Leave of Absence for pupils**
The following guidance has been issued to parents regarding leave of absence during term time.
The governors are keen to ensure that all children regularly attend school.

- all requests for authorised absence during term time will continue to be considered sympathetically and on their own merits but will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

If you are considering making a request for time away from school for your child it is important to contact Mr Doyle as early as possible to discuss the circumstances of your request. Any absences not agreed with the school will be recorded as **unauthorised** and will be discussed with the Educational Welfare Service and may result in your child losing their place at the school.

**Family holiday term time leave of absence**
Parents must appreciate that absence from school has been shown to have a negative effect on pupil's achievement and attitudes and as such, **the school will not authorise absences arising from family holidays.**

The Headteacher will not consider authorised absence for holidays.

**Procedures for recording pupils’ attendance and punctuality**
If a child is absent without explanation, parents will be contacted by the school’s Administrative Officer on the first day of absence and a note made against the child’s name using the ‘comments’ feature within the SIMs attendance module. Notes of explanations for absences are monitored by the Headteacher and the school’s EWO and are followed up if they are not satisfactory, or when absence persists, parents will be invited into school to discuss any difficulties that may prevent a pupil from attending.

All letters, telephone calls and medical certificates relating attendance and punctuality issues are dated, named and initialled by the staff member who receives them. These notes are kept in the child’s individual school file, as they may be required in legal proceedings.

We endeavour to provide an environment where parents can discuss any issues surrounding their child’s attendance and punctuality. The ethos of the school is such that attendance is seen as being very important and that the functioning of a class is diminished by a pupil’s absence or persistent lateness.

**EWO**
The school is committed to working closely with the EWO service to promote high levels of attendance and good punctuality of all pupils. There is a clear agreement between the school and the EWO about the best ways in which to deploy the time and energy of each in responding to attendance and punctuality problems and this is regularly reviewed. Regular monitoring meetings take place at the school between the EWO and the Headteacher. Prior to these meetings specific and general attendance data is provided by the school to the EWO for consideration. Prior to the EWO visits to the school staff are alerted and invited to share attendance and punctuality concerns with the Headteacher. This data is discussed further and action agreed, including sending letters noting attendance or punctuality concerns or acknowledging improvements or achievements. The EWO service is regularly consulted regarding related initiatives being undertaken within the school e.g. EWO being present at attendance and punctuality celebration assemblies.
Legal Action
The school is aware that on occasion, despite its best efforts legal action may have to be considered where a pupil’s attendance or punctuality continues to be of concern. Before instigating any legal action, the EWS would carefully consider the appropriateness of legal action and any decision will be guided by the legal enforcement policies of the EWS and the Local Authority.

Attendance and Punctuality data
The school uses the SIMs attendance module to generate ongoing attendance and punctuality data, including whole school year to date attendance and absence figures. The school also tracks attendance and punctuality data by year group, SEN (broken down into School Action, School Action + and Statemented pupils), boys and girls, EAL, FSM, pupils with high/persistently absence >15%, patterns of absence for particular days or times of the year e.g. Mondays & Fridays or immediately before and after school holidays.

Targets
The school sets annual attendance targets in consultation with the LA EWO service and regularly monitors its progress towards them. Currently the school is aiming to achieve an attendance rate of more than 97%.

Celebrating good attendance and punctuality
Attendance and punctuality achievement awards are presented at the first whole school assembly of the academic year (for the previous academic year’s attendance and punctuality achievements) and at the beginning of the spring and summer terms (for the previous terms attendance and punctuality achievements). A record of these pupils achievements are kept on the school file and information regarding individual pupil’s attendance and punctuality achievements are celebrated in the school newsletter.

Information relating to individual class’s attendance and punctuality levels are published in the school newsletter and praised when appropriate.

Year to date attendance and punctuality data is provided to parents at the autumn and spring term parent consultations information sheet and at the end of the summer term on the pupil’s individual annual school report.