

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing once again to remind you of your role and expectations as parents in upholding the academy's attendance policy. We would also like to reiterate the key areas of St Botolph's high expectations regarding school attendance.

Lateness

Pupils are expected to arrive into school at 8.45am and classroom doors will close at 9.00am. Any children arriving after 9.00am will need to enter school via the main office to explain the reason for their lateness. Arrivals between 9.00am and 9.15am (the time when registers close) will be marked with an L code ('late before registers close') and any arrivals after 9.15, without a viable reason previously communicated to the academy, will be marked using a U code ('unauthorised absence, after registers close'). Both of these codes impact a pupil's individual attendance score.

Lateness is disruptive to teaching and learning, so it is vital that parents ensure their child arrives at school on time.

Government Attendance Legislation

In line with attendance policies and procedures set out by the Department of Education, U codes are classed as unauthorised absence. Once a pupil has accrued 10 U codes per half term, 10 in 10 consecutive weeks, further action will be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (*see DfE Attendance Legislation and Wakefield Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available on the academy website*).

Absence

In the case of absence, PARENT'S MUST LEAVE A VOICEMAIL ON THE ABSENCE LINE BEFORE 9AM. Please clearly state your child's name, class and reason for absence. This must be done EVERY DAY of absence.

St Botolph's academy and the local authority take safeguarding and the welfare of our pupils very seriously and unexplained absence is the first sign of a potential safeguarding issue. Therefore, when absence is not communicated, the academy has a legal responsibility to carry out First Day Response, as follows:

1. Call will be made to parent/carer contact 1 & 2 to establish reason for absence.
2. If we are unable to reach parent contact 1 or 2, a text will be sent.
3. If school has still not been notified in the morning, staff will conduct a home visit to ensure there have been no emergencies putting a child at risk.

Home visits

As part of the Trust policy on attendance, academies have a responsibility to conduct home visits when a child has not been seen on school premises – despite reported illness – for 3 consecutive days (including weekends).

In such a case, two members of staff will visit the child to say 'hello' and offer support if required. Such procedures have been put into place following well known serious case reviews investigating deaths of children – for instance, Baby P (2007) and Star Hobson (2020). The outcomes of these investigations have found that, had wider agencies – such as schools – followed safeguarding procedures correctly, those deaths could have been prevented. Whilst these cases are incredibly rare, schools and local authorities

across the country have a duty of care to check in at home with ANY CHILD – regardless of background and circumstances – who has not been seen on school premises for 3 consecutive days. Please also take this into account if considering notifying the academy of an illness when you are taking a family holiday.

Term time holidays

In accordance with Department of Education legislation, the academy cannot authorise term-time holidays. Parents will be required to request certain types of exceptional absence in advance. All requests for absence will be considered by the Head of school – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Head of school, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. **The Head of school's decision of authorising or unauthorising a holiday request is not subject to appeal.**

1. Applications for a term time holiday must be done two school weeks in advance and sent via email, or in writing clearly stating dates of absence.
2. Unauthorised term-time holidays are marked on the register with a G code.
3. After 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (5 days) within a period of 10 weeks, parents will receive a letter notifying the intent to fine.

Ultimately, it is the decision of the parent whether they wish to take their child out of school for a term-time holiday. However, in such instances, the local authority has a legal obligation to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice when the child returns to school.

“The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a Term Time Holiday, the Penalty Notice (fine) will be £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of issue, reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second Penalty Notice to the same parent/s for the same pupil/s within 3 years of the first notice, the second Penalty Notice (fine) will be £160 per parent, per child (no reduced fee for paying early)

Fines will continue to be issued per parent per child, for example: 3 siblings in one family absent for term time leave would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

On the third time that an offence is committed for either a Term Time Holiday, a Penalty Notice will not be issued but the case may proceed straight to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of ‘Failure to send a child to school’, the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000”

Discussions can take place with the Head of school if you feel your circumstances are exceptional. However, please note that these ‘exceptional circumstances’ are very specifically outlined by the government.

The academy's attendance policy, together with the legislation from Wakefield Council and the Department of Education, is available on our website for you to refer to at any time.



We appreciate your continued support.

