




# Baytree School

## Attendance Policy

Mandatory/Non-Mandatory Model Policy	Mandatory
Annual/Bi-Annual	Annual
Date Ratified by FGB	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
Signed (Chair of Governing Board)	
Next Review Due	May 2026

### Aims

All learners have the right to attend school. Their attendance is required for 190 days per year. Baytree School will use daily registers to record the attendance patterns of learners. Poor or intermittent attendance below 90% will be investigated and challenged as appropriate. Parents/carers will be required to account for their child's whereabouts on days they do not attend school.

Parents/carers wishing to take their child on holiday will be required to make specific requests to the Headteacher using the Local Authority format. Holidays in term time may not be authorised

unless there are very special circumstances. Where learners have access to hospice care this will be automatically allowed as part of their holistic provision.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is an important factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our learners. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our learners.

Our school will give priority to emphasising to parents/carers and learners the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

Although Baytree School promotes high levels of attendance for all, we recognise that there may be the need for a learner to initially reduce school hours for an agreed period of time to support regular attendance, in consultation with parents/carers. Examples of this could include; change in health or circumstances. The details of which are formalised within in an agreed Return to School Provision. The Baytree School Outreach team may support learners in the home with education provision where a learners health may prevent them from coming onsite. The Outreach Team will provide visits and learning sessions to any learner in hospital for a prolonged period of time.

If there are concerns which affect a learner's attendance we will strive, in partnership with parents/carers, learners and the Education Welfare Service, to resolve any concerns as quickly and efficiently as possible.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Parents/carers have a duty to educate their children 'suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs which they may have' either by regular attendance at school or otherwise under Section 7 of The Education Act 1996. Parents/carers whose children are registered at school are then responsible for ensuring that they attend punctually, regularly and stay at school.

Schools have to call the attendance register twice per day – at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. School must ensure that attendance registers are kept, in accordance with legal requirements and the policy of the school. In addition, schools must inform the Local Authority about learners who do not attend school regularly or who have been continuously absent for two weeks or more (unless the absence is covered by a medical certificate).

Local Authorities are required to ensure parents/carers carry out their responsibilities with regard to their children's education. In North Somerset the Local Authority fulfils this requirement through the Education Welfare Service, whose primary responsibility is to enforce the regular and punctual school attendance of all learners.

## **PROCEDURES**

We will ensure all staff are aware of the registration procedures and that they will complete, accurate registration processes at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

We ask parents/carers to inform the school in writing or by telephone if they know in advance that their child is going to be away (e.g. medical appointment). We also request that parents/carers inform the school of any reason for absence, preferably by telephone on each day of illness by 9.30am.

Parents/carers should inform the Integrated Transport Unit directly at North Somerset of any changes in transport requirements.

In Baytree School it is the responsibility of office admin staff to communicate any absence to the Class Teacher. If a learner is absent and no message is received the office admin staff will contact parents/carers to enquire how learners are on the first day of absence. This information is then recorded in the learner Absence Diary.

### **All learners' absence will be followed up by a member of the admin team.**

Parents, carers or guardians are expected to contact the school directly on the first day of absence with a reason for absence. Parents/carers who do not make contact with the school regarding a child's absence and cannot be contacted by the school will have an unauthorised absence recorded for their child.

Parents, carers or guardians will be expected to contact school directly if the bout of illness lasts longer than originally anticipated.

If no contact is made by 9:30 the family will be rung by the school admin team until contact is made and an explanation given.

Learner absence will be considered on a weekly basis and, should a pupil's absence be unexplained for 3 days, or reasons for absence give cause for concern, a visit to the learner's home will be undertaken by a member of the SLT and, if there is no reply, a letter will be hand delivered to the family home.

If no contact has been made within 5 days a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

### **Authorisation of Absence**

In Baytree School the decision on authorising an absence will be taken by the Headteacher. The Class Teacher or admin team will consult with the Head when there are any causes for concern.

**Authorised Absence :** an absence agreed by the Headteacher with an explanation from parents/carers

**Unauthorised Absence :** an absence not agreed or unexplained

**Medical:** an appointment such as hospital, doctor or dentist etc

**Illness:** illness as informed by the parent/carer or on receipt of doctor's/hospital notes, if required

Full guidance on attendance codes is held in the school admin office and in each register.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

From 1 September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2013 removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days leave per year. The regulations make clear that Headteachers can only grant leave of absence during term time when there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher will determine if the request for an absence in term time is exceptional and will consider each request on a case-by-case basis. Some of the reasons we may consider as supporting an application for an absence in term time are:

- Respite at Children's Hospice or similar
- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Parents'/carers' employment restrictions – there are a few employers who restrict their employees' holiday leave. We may consider asking for some evidence from the employer
- Significant family events or circumstances – these will need to be considered individually

Where absence from school can be considered an "exceptional circumstance" a request should be granted. If a request is made for longer than 10 days parents/carers are contacted to discuss the request. Similarly, if multiple short breaks are requested that add up to 10 days parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the matter.

Governors at Baytree School fully recognise the stress and sensory overload that some children can experience in crowded situations from high levels of noise, needing to queue etc. When children are stressed this places additional strain on the rest of the family. This means that for some families to have a relaxing, restful holiday this needs to take place outside busy school holiday periods. Governors are also committed to granting leave of absence for family respite which is often only provided in term time.

## **STRATEGIES**

We will:

Promote positive staff attitudes to learners returning after absence.

Work towards ensuring that all learners feel supported and valued.

Send a clear message that if a learner is absent, they will be missed; this could include issuing a Penalty Notice as a 'last resort' (this decision will be taken by the Headteacher in consultation with an Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority).

Have procedures that allow absentees to catch up on missed work, without disrupting the learning of other class members.

Make provision for any learner returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, to ease back into the school system, if necessary.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Attendance levels will be monitored and reported to Governors three times a year.

An annual attendance action plan is created in order to monitor all learners attendance rates and identify and review interventions. Attendance data is reviewed for individual learners, classes and the school as a whole. We review attendance data looking for patterns of poor attendance; for example, Looked after Children and other cohorts of learners at risk.

Teachers will work with individual families to update Baytree 'Return to School provision' document on a termly basis. This document identifies strategies to support learners to full time attendance. Home learning may be identified where necessary through a personalised home learning plan.

Baytree School believes that it is essential to keep the policy 'alive'. Consultation and communication are key factors that will ensure that the Policy has a positive impact in maintaining good attendance.

We will ensure that we maintain a pro-active approach to supporting the needs of all learners and are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all.

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

We will review this policy at any point throughout the academic year, as needed in line with updated Government Covid guidance.

### **Policy Review**

<u>Reviewed by FGB:</u> 19 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	<u>Reviewed by FGB:</u> 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	<u>Reviewed by FGB:</u> 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	<u>Reviewed by FGB:</u> 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	<u>Reviewed by FGB:</u> 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
<u>Next Review due:</u> May 2022	<u>Next Review due:</u> May 2023	<u>Next Review due:</u> May 2024	<u>Next Review due:</u> May 2025	<u>Next Review due:</u> May 2026