# ATTENDANCE POLICY

October 2026

Imagine, Believe, Achieve

***"Let us run the race before us and never give up"***
***Hebrews 12:1***

# Matlock Bath Holy Trinity School Policy on Attendance

## 1 Introduction

1.1 This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. .

1.2 Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the School's Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DFE).

1.3 Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent/carer inform the school of the reasons for absence. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

1.4 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We may reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.5 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

1.6 There are times when children are ill and unable to come to school and other times their attendance will be out of their control due to family circumstances. We foster a culture of resilience and a natural drive to succeed; children are taught responsibility and perseverance, which we believe has an impact on attendance.

## 2 Definitions

2.1 **Authorised absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parents, an absence will be unathorised.

2.2 **Unauthorised absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

## 3 If a child is absent

3.1 Parents are requested to ring school as early as possible to notify us if their child will be absent. The school registers are taken at 8.55am each morning and taken through to the school office at 9am. If the school has been informed that the child will arrive late due to a medical/dental appointment, then an attendance mark will be given on arrival (code M). Children who have not arrived by the end of registration are marked as late (code L). Latecomers should report to the school office on arrival and the child will be given a 'late after close of registration' mark if they arrive after 9:15am (code U).

3.2 If the school has not been informed of a child's absence and the child has not arrived at school by 9.15am the School Business Officer will contact the parent/carer. They will then complete the register as appropriate.

3.3 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian as this then becomes an issue of Safeguarding and procedures will be followed to ensure the safety of our children.

## 4 Lateness

4.1 **Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.**
Children must be in class by 8:55 a.m. each day. The main school door is opened from 8.45am each morning. Registers will be taken at 8:55am. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. Repeated lateness will be monitored and reported to the LEA as appropriate to follow up; this may involve other agencies/departments, including Early Help or Starting Point.

4.2 Any child who arrives at school after the registers have closed at 9:15am, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

4.3 If a pupil is late due to a medical or dental appointment and comes to school later than 9.15am, they will receive an absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

4.4 Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents/ carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If persistent lateness occurs, parents / carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Headteacher.

## 5 The process of monitoring absence

1. A child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no satisfactory explanation is given for absence or if the school considers the information received from a parent is not an acceptable reason for absence.
2. Attendance will be monitored termly and parents will be informed of their child's attendance should it fall below the school's target of attendance of 96%.
3. Parents will be informed of their child's low attendance level and invited to discuss their child's attendance when:
   A child continues to be absent for more than 7 consecutive days without explanation.
   A child is absent for 7 school days or more with an unsatisfactory explanation.
   A child's attendance drops below our agreed attendance target.
4. Where a pattern of unauthorised absence persists or attendance does not improve, despite the school's involvement, the Local Authority will be consulted for further advice and guidance.
5. Staff will inform the school office of any unexplained absences and the school will then telephone home for a reason for absence.
6. If members of staff are concerned about the level of attendance or punctuality of any of the children in their class, they will inform the head teacher.
7. Towards the end of the Summer term, attendance figures will be included with the child's annual progress report.
8. Attendance figures are reported termly to the governors in the Head's Report.

## 5 Requests for leave of absence

5.1 In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

5.2 Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Leave of Absence Form, available from the school office, and handed in at least two school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

5.3 Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

## 6 Attendance targets

6.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. The school expects attendance of at least 96%. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## 7 Monitoring and review

7.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will

therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

7.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

7.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the annual governors' report to parents.

7.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

## 8 National framework for penalty notices

8.1 The national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

8.2 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

**Approved by: Governing Board** **Date: 12th October 2026**

AP Jones

**Review Date: October 2027**

# Matlock Bath Holy Trinity CofE (VC) Primary School

*Imagine, Believe, Achieve*

**APPENDIX ONE: COPY OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM**

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM AND READ INFORMATION OVERLEAF:** ***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013: Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application***

**Matlock Bath Holy Trinity CofE (VC) Primary School - APPLICATION BY PARENT/S FOR A CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.**

**To the Headteacher**

Name of Child..... Year Group .....

Name of both parents/carers .....

Address .....

.....

**I / We wish to apply for our child to be absent from school for EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.**
Dates:

From..... To.....

Total number of days requested .....

| Please supply in as much detail as possible the reason for your request and why you feel it is exceptional circumstances (separate piece of paper is acceptable): |
|---|
| |

Signed (both Parents/ Carers if applicable)

.....

**Authorised / Unauthorised by:** ..... **Date:** ...../...../.....

**THIS FORM SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE HEADTEACHER AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE DATE OF REQUESTED LEAVE.**