



THE QUILL C OF E TRUST

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

This policy is underpinned by the Trust vision 'Enlightening, Enriching, Empowering and Evolving Generations through education'

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes Made
0.1	14.11.23	Dawn Bonney	New Policy in line with guidance
0.2	24.07.24	Dawn Bonney	DFE Updates: • Collaborating with families to improve attendance • New absence thresholds require schools to consider penalty notices. • Accommodations for students with health issues or special educational needs • Senior Attendance Champions will have clearer responsibilities. • Schools must share their daily attendance records as required by regulations.
0.3	17.06.26	Dawn Bonney	Appendices have been included for each school within the Trust, outlining their individual approaches. • Added relevant legislation to Legal framework. • Table added for Roles and Responsibilities. • Added table for Bromcom codes. Introduction – changed 'strong' attendance to 'regular' attendance. Illness and Healthcare Appointments – took out 'if requested' when providing evidence of appointments.

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1. Introduction

The Quill CofE Trust firmly believes that regular attendance is fundamental to effective teaching and learning. Regular school attendance is essential in enabling pupils to reach their full academic and personal potential. We recognise, however, that attendance can be challenging for some pupils and families. Therefore, we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where all pupils feel valued, secure, and motivated to attend.

We prioritise building strong, trusting relationships with pupils and their families, recognising that partnership working is key to promoting positive attendance and a successful school experience.

Our Trust adopts an inclusive and integrated approach to promoting attendance. We recognise that attendance is influenced by a wide range of factors across school life. High-quality curriculum provision, consistent behaviour expectations, robust safeguarding practices, effective medical and SEND support, and strong pastoral care all contribute significantly to enabling pupils to attend regularly. We also acknowledge that the strategic use of resources, including pupil premium, plays a vital role in removing barriers and ensuring equitable access to education. We are committed to:

- Ensuring that all pupils attend regularly and benefit from a broad, ambitious, and high-quality education, recognising attendance as both a safeguarding priority and an equity issue.
- Promoting equality, fairness, and inclusion, ensuring that pupils with SEND or health needs receive appropriate adjustments and support to attend and thrive.
- Maintaining the health, safety, and wellbeing of all pupils, in line with statutory safeguarding responsibilities.
- Building strong, positive relationships with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance, and working collaboratively to overcome them.
- Working in partnership with external agencies (including health, social care, SEND services, and early help teams) to provide coordinated and timely support.
- Collaborating with local schools and partners to share effective practice and prevent persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring compliance with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, recognising the parental duty to secure suitable full-time education.
- Using accurate and regular data analysis to identify trends, vulnerable groups, and pupils requiring early intervention, and implementing evidence-informed strategies.
- Providing targeted support for pupils with SEND, medical needs, or mental health difficulties, including reasonable adjustments and access to specialist services.
- Ensuring all staff are trained, informed, and accountable for promoting attendance, including understanding the role of the Senior Attendance Champion and wider attendance systems.

The Headteacher supervises the school's attendance strategies. Please contact the Attendance Lead if you have any concerns about day-to-day absence. Our primary objective is to establish an all-inclusive, empowering, and supportive learning environment for every pupil.

School	Contact Details	Attendance Lead	Headteacher
St. Bede CofE Primary Academy	01204 61899 inclusion@stbedeacademy.org	Mrs D Bonney	Mrs A Black
Tonge Moor Primary Academy	01204 328994 biggsr@tongemooracademy.org	Mrs R Biggs	Mrs N Whittaker
Woodland Primary Academy	01942 634756 office@woodlandprimaryacademy.org	Mrs J Faroni	Mr C Howarth

2. Legal Framework

This policy is compliant with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance relating to school attendance, safeguarding, and inclusion. It should be read in conjunction with the following key documents:

- Education Act 1996 – sets out the legal duty of parents/carers to ensure their child receives a suitable full-time education.
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) – outlines requirements for maintaining school attendance registers and recording absence.
- DfE Statutory Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024) – provides expectations for schools, trusts, and local authorities in promoting attendance and reducing absence.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – establishes safeguarding duties, including the link between attendance and pupil welfare.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice (2015) – sets out statutory responsibilities for supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan and SEND White Paper direction – outlines national priorities for improving outcomes and inclusion for pupils with SEND.
- Equality Act 2010 – requires schools to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and make reasonable adjustments for pupils with protected characteristics.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 – places duties on schools relating to behaviour, attendance promotion, and safeguarding.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Promoting high levels of attendance is a whole-school responsibility. The Trust expects all stakeholders to play an active role in ensuring pupils attend regularly and on time.

Role	Key Responsibilities
Directors & Local Governing Bodies	• Set strategic direction for attendance across the Trust • Monitor attendance performance and challenge underperformance • Ensure compliance with statutory guidance and legislation
Headteacher	• Embed a whole-school culture of good attendance • Ensure statutory compliance with registers and coding • Oversee attendance systems and staff training • Ensure reasonable adjustments for SEND/medical needs • Ensure curriculum, behaviour, and pastoral systems support attendance
Attendance Lead	• Monitor daily attendance and follow up absences • Maintain accurate registers • Identify pupils at risk of persistent absence • Coordinate early help and targeted support • Consult with families and external agencies • Produce attendance reports
Teachers & Support Staff	• Build positive relationships with pupils and families • Create an engaging, inclusive classroom environment • Monitor attendance patterns in their class/year group • Raise concerns promptly with attendance/pastoral teams • Support reintegration after absence
Pupils	• Attend school regularly and on time • Engage positively with learning and support • Communicate concerns that may affect attendance

Parents & Carers	• Ensure regular and punctual attendance • Inform the school promptly of absences • Work with the school to address barriers • Attend meetings and engage with support • Avoid term-time holidays
Local Authority	• Fulfil statutory duties for Children Missing Education (CME) • Provide support and challenge to schools • Issue penalty notices or pursue legal action where appropriate • Coordinate early help and multi-agency support • Support pupils with SEND, medical needs, or social care involvement

4. Definitions

The following definitions apply within this policy:

Absence

- Failure to attend school for any reason.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed, recorded as an absence for that session.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when the school has granted approval. This may include:

- Illness or medical reasons, where the school is satisfied the absence is unavoidable.
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of school hours (e.g. hospital appointments).
- Religious observance, where the day is exclusively set apart for religious celebration.
- Exceptional circumstances, where leave of absence has been formally requested and approved by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when the school has not granted approval. This includes:

- Absences with no reason provided or where the explanation is not accepted.
- Keeping a child off school unnecessarily, including for minor or avoidable reasons.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence for activities such as shopping, birthdays, or caring for siblings.
- Holidays or day trips taken during term time without prior approval.
- Leaving school during the day without permission.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil is defined as persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions across a defined period (usually an academic year), for any reason (authorised or unauthorised).

Severely Absent (SA)

A pupil is considered severely absent when they miss 50% or more of their possible sessions.

5. Expectations for Attendance

The Trust places a high priority on excellent attendance and punctuality, recognising their fundamental role in securing strong educational outcomes and promoting pupil wellbeing. Expectations are communicated regularly and clearly to pupils and parents/carers through a range of channels, including parent/carers meetings, school reports, newsletters, the school website, and social media platforms.

All pupils are expected to attend school every day, arrive on time, and remain in school for the full duration of the school day, unless there is an authorised reason for absence.

Registration Procedures

Attendance registers will be completed accurately and in a timely manner, in line with statutory requirements. The morning register will be taken in each classroom at the start of the school day, as detailed in the table below.

School	Morning Register Open	Morning Register Close
St. Bede CofE Primary Academy	8:45am	9:00am
Tonge Moor Primary Academy	8:45am	9:00am
Woodland Primary Academy	8:50am	9:15am

The morning register will close at the time specified; pupils arriving after this point will receive an unauthorised absence mark (U code).

The afternoon register will be taken at the start of the afternoon session and will close 15 minutes after the session begins.

6. Procedures for Absences

Reporting Absence

Parents/carers must inform the school on each day of absence by telephone or email, providing a clear reason. The only exception is where a return date has already been agreed with the school (e.g. for sickness and diarrhoea following advice from office staff). If no contact is received by 9:15am, the school will initiate follow-up procedures.

First-Day Response and Safeguarding

The school takes all absences seriously and will follow up promptly to:

- Ascertain the reason for absence.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.
- Determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Record the absence using the correct national attendance code.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, or no contact is made, the Attendance Lead may carry out a home visit to ensure pupil welfare.

If a pupil identified as vulnerable or at risk is absent without explanation, the school will contact the Early Intervention Service (EIS) within the Local Authority, who may also undertake a home visit.

Ongoing Monitoring and Intervention

If a pupil is absent for five days (10 sessions) within a 10-week period, the school may request a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) from the Local Authority. Fines are issued at £80 per parent per child (rising if unpaid within the specified timeframe), in line with Local Authority procedures.

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (Persistent Absence):

- Parents/carers will be formally notified.
- The school will implement supportive intervention strategies.
- A plan will be agreed to identify and remove barriers to attendance.

Throughout this process, the school will work in partnership with families, offering support, guidance, and where necessary, access to external services.

Attendance Register

The Trust uses Bromcom to maintain accurate and secure attendance records. Registers are completed:

- At the start of the school day (morning session).
- At the start of the afternoon session.

Registers will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational activity (e.g. trip or alternative provision)
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Attendance Coding

School use the national attendance codes in line with statutory guidance to ensure consistency and accuracy in recording attendance.

Table 1: Present and Authorised Absence

Code	Reason
/	Present in the morning
\	Present in the afternoon
L	Late (before the register closed)
I	Illness
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
C	Exceptional circumstances (agreed)
C1	Approved absence for performance/work abroad
C2	Agreed part-time timetable (short term)
J1	Interview (job/school/college)
B	Approved education off-site
D	Dual registration (attending another school)
K	Education arranged by the Local Authority
V	School trip or educational visit
P	Supervised sporting activity
S	Study leave

Table 2: Unauthorised, Other and Exceptional Circumstances

Code	Reason
O	Unauthorised absence (no valid reason)
G	Unauthorised holiday
U	Late (after the register closed)
N	No reason yet provided
E	Excluded (no alternative provision yet)
Q	Unable to attend – access arrangements not available
Y1	School transport not available
Y2	Travel disruption (e.g. severe weather)
Y3	Part of school closed
Y4	Whole school closed unexpectedly
Y5	Criminal justice detention
Y6	Public health advice/law
Y7	Other unavoidable cause
Y	Exceptional circumstances (e.g. emergency closure)
X	Not of compulsory school age
Z	Not yet on school roll

7. Authorising Leave of Absence Requests

Requests for Leave of Absence

Parents/carers must submit a leave of absence request form at least two weeks in advance of the proposed absence. The request must include:

- The reason for the absence.
- The dates and duration of the proposed leave.

In line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, pupils are expected to attend school every day unless they are unwell or there are exceptional circumstances.

Schools will only authorise a leave of absence where the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional. Each request will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the pupil's overall attendance and the impact on their learning.

Circumstances where leave is unlikely to be authorised

Requests for leave will not normally be approved in the following circumstances:

- During statutory assessment periods or other key academic times.
- Where a pupil has a record of unauthorised absences, either in the current or previous academic years.
- Where a pupil's attendance is already a concern, including where it is below expected levels.
- For the purpose of holidays, day trips, or leisure activities during term time.

Unauthorised Leave and Penalties

If leave is taken without approval:

- The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- The school may request a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) from the Local Authority.
- Penalties may include a fine per parent, per child, in line with Local Authority procedures.

The school cannot authorise leave retrospectively. Any absence not agreed in advance will be recorded as unauthorised.

Illness and Healthcare Appointments

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Arrange medical and dental appointments outside school hours, where possible.
- Request authorisation in advance where this is not feasible.
- Ensure pupils attend school for as much of the day as possible (before/after appointments).
- Provide evidence of appointments.

Where there are concerns about absence due to illness:

- Frequent illness without supporting medical evidence may be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical evidence may be requested where absence occurs:

- At the start or end of term.
- Before or after a holiday or leave period.
- Where patterns of absence raise concern.

Parents are encouraged to refer to NHS and DfE guidance regarding mild illness and school attendance.

Religious Observance

The Trust recognises and respects the right of pupils to take leave for religious observance.

Requests must be made in advance by parents/carers. Absence will be authorised only where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. This typically refers to a day when individuals are expected to refrain from work in observance of a religious event.

Where:

- More than one day is requested, the school will normally authorise one day only.
- There is uncertainty, the school will seek guidance from the relevant religious authority.

8. SEND and health-related absences

The Trust recognises that pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and/or medical or mental health conditions may face additional barriers to regular school attendance. However, all pupils are entitled to a full-time education, and high expectations for attendance apply to every pupil, alongside appropriate support.

We are committed to ensuring that these pupils are supported to attend school regularly through an inclusive, flexible, and responsive approach.

Our Approach

- Ensuring that pupils with SEND and/or health needs receive appropriate, reasonable adjustments to support their attendance
- Reviewing and adapting Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and Individual Healthcare Plans (IHCPs) where attendance barriers are identified.
- Providing targeted pastoral support to address emotional, social, or medical needs impacting attendance.
- Maintaining clear communication with parents/carers, working collaboratively to understand and reduce barriers.

Multi-Agency Support

Where additional needs are identified, schools will work in partnership with relevant services to provide coordinated support, including:

- Children's Services
- Early Intervention Service (EIS)
- Early Help teams
- School nursing services
- SEND and specialist outreach services

This collaborative and inclusive approach ensures that support is timely, appropriate, and centred on the needs of the child.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Trust recognises the strong link between mental health and attendance.

Where absence may be linked to mental health concerns, schools will engage with parents/carers to discuss concerns and identify appropriate support. Schools will consider graduated responses, including pastoral interventions, referrals, and external support where appropriate.

If a pupil's mental health presents a safeguarding concern, staff will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

9. Attendance Intervention

The Trust adopts a graduated, supportive, and data-informed approach to improving attendance. Early identification and timely intervention are central to preventing patterns of absence from becoming entrenched.

Detailed procedures and staged intervention pathways are outlined in the appendices for each school within the Trust, reflecting their individual contexts and local authority arrangements.

10. Working with parents/carers to improve attendance

The Trust is committed to building positive, respectful, and trusting relationships with parents/carers, recognising that strong partnerships are essential in promoting good attendance and pupil success.

We will maintain clear, open, and honest communication with pupils and their families regarding school expectations, attendance, and academic progress, ensuring that all stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities.

Our Approach

- Establishing and maintaining strong relationships with families, based on mutual respect and collaboration.
- Communicating clear expectations for attendance and punctuality through a range of channels.
- Ensuring parents/carers understand their legal responsibility to secure regular attendance and their child's right to a full-time education.
- Keeping parents/carers informed about their child's attendance, punctuality, and absence patterns.

Safeguarding and Communication

- Maintaining at least two up-to-date emergency contact details for every pupil.
- Contacting parents/carers promptly when a pupil is absent without explanation.
- Ensuring all absence follow-up procedures are conducted in line with safeguarding expectations.

Early Support and Intervention

Where attendance concerns arise:

- The Attendance Lead, under the direction of the Headteacher, will work with pupils and families to identify and address barriers to attendance.
- Schools will take a sensitive and supportive approach, recognising that absence may be linked to complex family or individual circumstances.
- Parents/carers will be supported through meetings, guidance, and agreed action plans.

Working with internal and external services

Where barriers are school-related, the Attendance Lead will work with relevant staff, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and SENCo, to implement appropriate support.

Where barriers are external or family-related, schools will work in partnership with external agencies, such as:

- Children's Services
- Early Intervention Service (EIS)
- Local Authority services
- Early Help

This coordinated approach ensures that families receive appropriate, timely, and effective support.

Promoting the Importance of Attendance

Schools will actively promote the benefits of regular attendance by:

- Highlighting the link between attendance and attainment.
- Supporting pupils' social development and wellbeing.
- Reinforcing the importance of attendance for future opportunities and life chances.

11. Persistent Absence (PA)

The Trust recognises that certain groups of pupils may be more vulnerable to high levels of absence and persistent absence (PA). These groups may include:

- Children in Need (CiN)
- Children Looked After (CLA) and previously looked after children
- Young carers
- Pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Support for pupils at risk of persistent absence

Schools will implement a range of targeted and supportive strategies to improve attendance, including:

- Providing catch-up support to address gaps in learning and rebuild confidence.
- Meeting regularly with pupils to explore patterns of absence and underlying barriers.
- Developing individual attendance support plans.
- Conducting regular review meetings and check-ins to monitor progress.
- Maintaining frequent and supportive communication with families.
- Assessing the need for Early Help or multi-agency support.
- Supporting re-engagement strategies, particularly for vulnerable pupils.

Schools will prioritise pupils with high rates of absence and work with the Local Authority and external partners to ensure appropriate support is in place.

Safeguarding Considerations

Persistent absence may indicate an increased risk of harm. The school will:

- Treat attendance concerns as a potential safeguarding issue.
- Work with relevant agencies, including Children's Services, where necessary.
- Escalate concerns where absence continues despite intervention.

Where persistent absence remains unresolved, it may be considered a form of neglect, and action will be taken in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

12. Legal Action

The Trust recognises that low attendance can reflect complex family circumstances and will prioritise support-first approaches. Where concerns persist despite support:

- Schools will work in partnership with the Local Authority and external agencies to address barriers.
- Legal intervention will be considered only as a last resort, where all supportive measures have been exhausted.

Possible legal interventions

- Formal meetings with parents/carers and senior leaders.
- Implementation of a Parenting Contract.
- Application for an Education Supervision Order (ESO).
- Referral to Children's Services where safeguarding concerns are identified.
- Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).
- Prosecution for failure to secure regular attendance.

All legal decisions will be:

- Applied fairly and consistently.
- Made on a case-by-case basis.
- In line with statutory guidance.
- Applicable only to pupils of compulsory school age.

Schools will continue to engage and support families throughout this process.

13. Monitoring and Analysing Attendance

The Trust places strong emphasis on the effective use of attendance data to drive improvement.

Data Collection

The Attendance Lead will regularly monitor and analyse data relating to:

- The whole school cohort.
- Individual year groups and classes.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups (e.g. ethnicity, disadvantage).
- Key groups, including SEND, LAC, FSM, and EAL pupils.
- Pupils identified as at risk of Persistent Absence.

Data Analysis

Attendance data will be analysed half-termly, termly, and annually to identify:

- Patterns in the use of attendance codes.
- Trends in lateness and absence.
- Days or periods of low attendance.
- Historical trends and emerging concerns.
- Barriers impacting attendance.

Use of Data

- Inform targeted interventions and strategic planning.
- Monitor the effectiveness of support and interventions.
- Ensure staff are aware of pupil attendance concerns and required actions.
- Support safeguarding by identifying risk indicators early.

Governance and Accountability

The Local Governing Body (LGB) will review attendance data regularly, including trends over time. Senior leaders will use this information to set priorities and establish targets for improvement. Schools will benchmark its attendance against local, regional, and national data, and effective practice will be shared across the Trust and with partner schools.

Appendix



St. Bede CofE Primary Academy – Attendance Approach (to be read alongside the Trust Attendance Policy).

Purpose

This appendix outlines the operational procedures for attendance at St. Bede CofE Primary Academy in line with the Trust Attendance Policy and statutory guidance. It provides clarity on daily processes, roles, and escalation pathways specific to this school.

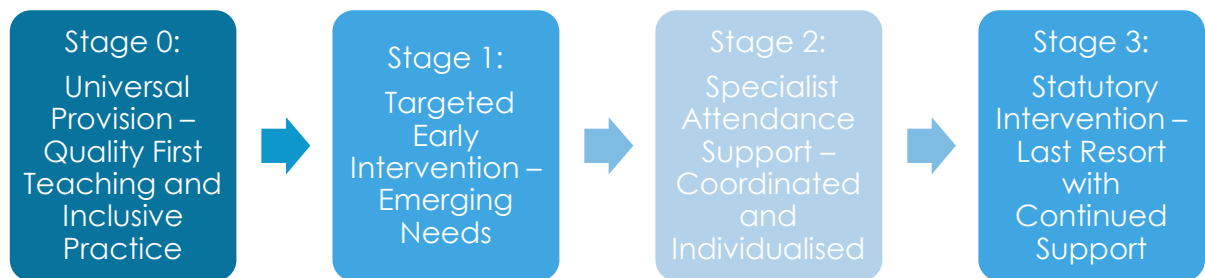
1. Context and Rationale

St Bede CofE Primary Academy adopts a nurturing, inclusive, and relationship-centred approach to attendance. We recognise that attendance is not only central to learning but also a key indicator of wellbeing and safety.

We understand that some pupils and families face complex and individual barriers to attendance. Our approach is therefore rooted in early identification, empathy, and partnership, ensuring that all pupils feel safe, supported, and able to access education.

2. Attendance Intervention Model (Graduated and Supportive Approach)

The school follows a graduated, inclusive model, ensuring support is proportionate, personalised, and responsive to need.



Stage 0: Universal Provision – Quality First Teaching and Inclusive Practice

- Consistent, predictable routines across classrooms to reduce anxiety and promote security.
- Adaptive teaching so pupils with gaps or SEND can access learning confidently.
- Clear explanations and modelling to build confidence and reduce disengagement.
- A positive behaviour culture rooted in relationships and belonging.
- A coherent curriculum that supports understanding and progression.
- Visible attendance messaging within learning, reinforcing the link between attendance and success.

Key Principle:

A strong universal offer reduces barriers before they emerge.

Stage 1: Targeted Early Intervention – Emerging Needs

- Identification of barriers to attendance through monitoring and discussion.
- Supportive, non-judgemental conversations with families.
- Targeted pastoral support addressing emotional and social needs.
- Additional classroom adaptations to improve engagement.
- Collaborative working between staff to ensure a joined-up approach.
- Short-term, achievable targets to build momentum.

Key Principle:

Early action focuses on understanding needs and removing barriers through partnership.

Stage 2: Specialist Attendance Support – Coordinated and Individualised

- Multi-agency collaboration to develop a holistic understanding of need.
- Involvement of specialist staff, including SEND expertise.
- Intensified pastoral and emotional support.
- Curriculum and timetable adaptations to support re-engagement.
- Enhanced support for families where wider circumstances impact attendance.

Key Principle:

Support is flexible, personalised, and rooted in maintaining connection to school.

Stage 3: Statutory Intervention – Last Resort with Continued Support

- Issue of a Notice to Improve
- Consideration of a Penalty Notice (fine) in line with guidance

Legal intervention where necessary, including:

- Prosecution under Section 444 Education Act 1996
- Education Supervision Order (ESO)

Key Principle:

Statutory action is used only after supportive approaches have been fully explored, with a continued focus on safeguarding and engagement.

3. School Attendance Priorities

St Bede CofE Primary Academy prioritises:

- Reducing persistent absence through early, supportive intervention.
- Improving attendance for vulnerable groups (SEND, FSM, EAL).
- Strengthening engagement with families.
- Ensuring a consistent and compassionate response.

Key Ethos

At St. Bede CofE Primary Academy, attendance is approached through a lens of inclusion, safeguarding, and care, ensuring every child is:

- Able to attend.
- Supported to attend.
- Ready to succeed.