THE QUILL C OF E TRUST

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Changes Made
1	14/11/23	Dawn Bonney	New Policy in line with guidance
2	24/08/24	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.
3	20/06/25	Dawn Bonney	Amendments to the morning register closing time.

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THE QUILL C OF E TRUST

1. Introduction

This policy and its contents are underpinned by the Trust vision of 'Enlightening, Enriching, Empowering and Evolving generations through education' and the Trust's values: excellence, leadership, evolution, family, love and resilience.

The Quill C of E Trust passionately believes that good attendance is crucial for effective teaching and learning. We understand that regular school attendance is necessary for pupils to reach their full potential. We also recognise that attendance can be challenging for some pupils and aim to create a safe and supportive environment. We prioritise building solid relationships with pupils and parents to promote a positive school experience.

Our Trust takes a comprehensive approach to ensuring good attendance. We acknowledge that other factors, such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying prevention, SEND support, pastoral care, and the effective use of resources, such as the pupil premium, can significantly impact student attendance.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that all pupils can attend school regularly and benefit from the valuable education it provides.
- Promoting equality and fairness for all.
- Maintaining the health and safety of our pupils.
- Collaborating closely with other agencies.
- Establishing positive relationships with families to address barriers that impede regular
- attendance.
- Collaborating with other schools in the area and various agencies. Collaboration is essential for achieving our goals effectively.
- Ensuring compliance with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996. This provision stipulates that parents are responsible for providing their school-age children with a comprehensive education appropriate for their age, abilities, interests, and special educational needs.
- Regularly monitoring attendance and absence data to identify pupils or groups needing more support.

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 student.

School	Contact Details	Headteacher	Attendance Lead
St Bede C of E Primary Academy	01204 61899 parents@stbedeacademy.org	Mrs Anna Black	Mrs Dawn Bonney
Tonge Moor Primary Academy	01204 328994 biggsr@tongemooracademy.org	Mrs Nicola Whittaker	Mrs Racheal Biggs
Washacre Primary Academy	01942 634756 office@washacreacademy.org	Mr Chris Howarth	Mrs Jennifer Ashcroft

2. Legal framework

This policy complies with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

- Education Act 1996.
- Equality Act 2010.
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended).
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'.
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'.
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The following documents have informed the roles and responsibilities section:

Summary Table of Roles and Responsibilities https://tinyurl.com/4jmv3b9s

Working Together to Improve School Attendance https://tinyurl.com/hwavwxw3

Directors and Local Governing Bodies hold the ultimate responsibility for:

- Overseeing the execution of this policy and ensuring that all relevant procedures are followed.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the Trust's ethos
- and policies.
- Working with the Senior Leadership Team to establish attendance goals and provide assistance and guidance in achieving them.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practices for managing and improving attendance across schools.
- Ensuring our policy prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Assisting with any concerns or complaints about the school's policy as stated in the Complaints
- Procedures Policy.
- Have guidelines for children missing education and regularly review and update them.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation and management of this policy and procedures in the school.
- Appointing a member of the school team to the attendance lead role.
- Ensuring all parents are well-informed about the school's attendance policies and procedures.
- Ensuring every pupil can access full-time education and that absence patterns will be addressed promptly.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so, too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.

- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to decide whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Alongside the Headteacher, the attendance lead is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents about attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Inform the Local Authority of any pupil who has been deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually.

Parents are responsible for the following:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children

4. Definitions

The definitions listed below apply to the intention of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has
- granted leave (i.e., hospital appointments).
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Absences which have never been adequately explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time, which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 per cent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

5. Expectations for Attendance

Our schools place great importance on pupils' attendance and punctuality, regularly communicating these expectations to parents and pupils. This is achieved through various channels, including parent-teacher meetings, school reports, the school website, and social media. Pupils are expected to arrive on time and attend school all day on all required school days.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be taken in each classroom at the time detailed in the table below.
- Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show they were on site, but this will be a late mark.
- The morning registers will close at the time detailed in the table below.
- Pupils will receive an unauthorised mark of absence if they attend school after the register has closed.
- The afternoon registers will close 15 minutes after the start of the afternoon session.

School	Morning Register Taken	Morning Register Closes
St Bede C of E Primary Academy	8:50 am	9:00 am
Tonge Moor Primary Academy	8:50 am	9:00 am
Washacre Primary Academy	8:50 am	9:00 am

6. Procedures for Absences

Parents must contact the school by phone or email each day their child is absent. The only exception is if the child is ill with sickness and diarrhoea, and parents have already spoken to a member of the office staff to confirm the date of the child's return. If we haven't heard from anyone by 9:15 a.m. on the day of the absence, the school's attendance lead may conduct a home visit to ensure the child's and the family's welfare. The schools take attendance seriously and will always follow up on any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to enter the data into the register.

If a pupil considered at risk is absent from school and no communication has been made, the attendance lead will notify the Early Intervention Service (EIS), part of the Local Authority. The EIS will then conduct a home visit to determine the reason for the absence.

If a student is absent for five days (equivalent to 10 sessions) over ten weeks, a fixed penalty notice (fine) of £80 per parent per child will be issued on behalf of the Local Authority.

If a student has persistent absence (attendance less than 90%), the attendance lead will inform the parent of the school's absence procedures and identify any further support needed to improve the child's attendance. Throughout this process, the school will work closely with parents to remove or reduce barriers.

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Attendance register

The Trust uses Bromcom to keep attendance registers, ensuring they are accurate and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities and external agencies.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and the afternoon session.

This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We use national attendance codes to monitor and record attendance and absence consistently.

The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- C = Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances.
- C1 = Leave of absence to participate in a regulated performance or to undertake regulated employment abroad.
- C2 = Leave of absence for a compulsory school-age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.
- J1 = Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.
- K = Attending educational provision arranged by the local authority.
- Q = Unable to attend school due to a lack of access arrangements.
- Y1 = Unable to attend due to the transport normally provided not being available.
- Y2 = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.
- Y3 = Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
- Y4 = Unable to attend due to the entire school site being unexpectedly closed.
- Y5 = Unable to attend as the pupil is in criminal justice detention.
- Y6 = Unable to attend due to public health guidance or law.
- Y7 = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause.
- E = Excluded, but no alternative provision made.
- S = Leave of absence to study for a public examination.
- I = Illness.
- M = Medical appointments.
- R = Religious observance.
- B = Off-site educational activity.
- G = Unauthorised holiday.
- O = Unauthorised absence.
- U = Arrived after registration closed.
- N = Reason not yet provided.
- X = Non-compulsory school-age pupil not required to attend school.
- T = Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence.

- V = Educational visit or trip.
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity.
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment.
- Y = Exceptional circumstances (such as the school site closed due to a local or national emergency).
- Z = Pupil not on the admission register.

Any changes made to the attendance register will be documented. This includes the original and revised entries, the reason for the update, the change date, and the name of the person making the modification. All entries in the attendance register will be retained for three years.

7. Authorising leave of absence requests

Parents must complete a leave request form and submit it to the Headteacher at least two weeks before the proposed start date to request a leave of absence. The form should include the reason for the absence and the expected dates of the absence. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered individually, considering the student's attendance record, academic performance, and previous absence requests. If approved, the Headteacher will determine the length of the absence. However, the school will not grant leaves of absence for extended leave or family holidays, as per the 2013 amendments that prohibit Headteachers from granting leave during term time.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods.
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence (from the current year or previous years).
- Where a pupil's unauthorised absence record is already above 10 per cent for any reason.
- Where a pupil's attainment is below that expected for their year group.

If a request for term-time leave is not approved, taking a student out of school will be considered an unauthorised absence and may lead to penalties, such as a fixed fine. The school cannot approve leave retrospectively, so any absences not pre-approved will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments:

Parents should try to schedule their children's medical or dental appointments outside school hours. However, if this is not possible, they must seek approval for their child's absence so that the child can attend the appointment as early as possible. The parents must ensure that their child misses only the necessary amount of time to participate in the appointment and provide proof. If the child is subsequently feeling unwell and parents are unsure whether to keep them off school, please refer to guidance from the NHS.

Please note:

- Frequent absence claimed as illness, unsupported by medical evidence, may be marked as
- unauthorised.
- If a child is absent due to illness at the end or start of term, medical evidence may be required
- to authorise the absence.
- If a child is absent due to illness before or after a leave of absence or a holiday, the school may require medical evidence to authorise the absence.

Religious observance:

Parents must request permission in advance for their child's absence due to religious observance. Schools must mark the absence as authorised only if it falls on a day exclusively designated for religious observance by the parents' religious body, not by the parents themselves. Typically, a day exclusively set apart for religious observance refers to a day when the parents are expected by their religious body to refrain from working to commemorate the occasion. Schools should consult with the parents' religious body in case of uncertainty to verify if the day is designated for religious observance. If the religious body sets aside a day for religious observance and the parent requests more than one day off, the school may only approve one day. If there is any uncertainty about the request, the school will seek guidance from the relevant religious body.

8. SEND and health-related absences

The Trust acknowledges that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions may encounter more obstacles to attending school than their peers. However, these pupils are entitled to the same education as any other student; therefore, the Trust's attendance expectations are the same. Schools will reasonably adjust any Education Health Care Plan or Individual Health Care Plans to reduce attendance barriers. Schools may also seek assistance from external partners, such as children's services, the Early Intervention Service, the Early Help Process and the school nursing team, to improve attendance where necessary. If a school suspects that a student's non-attendance may be due to mental health issues, the parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and factors contributing to their child's lack of attendance. If a staff member has concerns about a student's mental health that pose a safeguarding concern, they will notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

9. Attendance Intervention

To ensure effective absence management procedures, the attendance lead, with support from the Headteacher, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of
- the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures. Establish robust
- escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:

    a) Sending letters to parents/warning letters.
    b) Attendance alerts via My Child at School (MCAS).
    c) Supporting parents with pupil attendance.
    d) Engaging with Bolton Local Authority Early Intervention attendance teams.
    e) Using fixed penalty notices.

Schools will analyse attendance data according to the 'Monitoring and Analysing Absence' guidanceto identify patterns of absence and develop targeted strategies to improve attendance. These strategies will be tailored to individual cases and consider the unique needs of the pupil targeted by the intervention.

Schools will acknowledge attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Parents' evenings.
- Pupil reports to parents.
- Celebration assemblies.
- Non-uniform days.
- Social media.
- Classroom posters.
- Extra playtimes.
- Attendance parties.

10. Working with Parents to Improve Attendance

We aim to establish positive and respectful relationships with parents and families to gain their trust and involvement. Clear and truthful communication will be maintained with pupils and their families regarding school expectations, attendance, and academic performance so they understand what is expected of them. The school will collaborate with external agencies, such as Children's Services and the Early Intervention Service, to promote student attendance and engagement. Additionally, schools will maintain two sets of emergency contact information for each pupil to contact responsible adults in the event of an absence without notice or permission.

Parents will be informed of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and that their child has the right to a full-time education. The school will keep parents updated on their child's attendance, absence, and punctuality and will emphasise the benefits of regular attendance for their child's educational, social, and personal development.

If a student's absence becomes an issue, the attendance lead, under the direction of the Headteacher, will work with the student and their parents to overcome any specific barriers that prevent the student from attending school regularly. The school will consider the sensitivity of the reasons for the student's absence and offer support to families when necessary. If the barriers are school-related, the attendance lead will collaborate with relevant staff, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), to address the issue. If the barriers are outside the school's control, such as issues within the student's family, the attendance lead will work with external agencies, such as Children's Services or the Local Authority, to support the parents.

11. Persistent Absence (PA)

Various groups of pupils may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need.
- Looked after children (LAC).
- Young carers.
- Pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND).

Schools will use several methods to help support pupils at risk of PA in attending school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other
- problems they may have.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether early help is needed.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable
- groups.

School focus particularly on pupils with high rates of absence to address any barriers preventing these pupils from attending school regularly. Schools will work with the Local Authority and other partners to engage all necessary services.

When a student is at risk of persistent absence, they may also be at an increased risk of harm. School take their duty of care seriously and will work with relevant authorities, such as social services, to support the student.

If a student's persistent absence continues even after intervention, it may be considered a form of neglect. The school will escalate any concerns in accordance with its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

12. Legal Action

When a student is frequently absent from school, it could be a sign of underlying issues being dealt with by their family. To address this, schools, Trusts, and Local Authorities must collaborate with other regionalpartners to identify the reasons for the absences and offer support. If these efforts prove unsuccessful, the law protects the student's right to an education and provides legal interventions to improve attendance. As a last resort, parents may face prosecution if all other options have been exhausted. It is important to note that attendance legal intervention only applies to pupils at compulsory school age,and decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. The school will work with pupils to improve attendance through engagement strategies and interventions. The attendance lead will consider further actions if attendance does not improve after a half-term, as follows:

- Hold a formal meeting with parents, the Headteacher, or the attendance lead.
- Work with the Local Authority to establish a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
- Engage Children's Services where there are safeguarding concerns.

13. Monitoring and Analysing Absences

The attendance lead will regularly monitor and analyse attendance data to promptly address chronic absence at the first signs. The school will collect data on punctuality and authorised and unauthorised absences for:

- The school cohort.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.

- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC, and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of Persistent Absence.

The attendance lead will thoroughly analyse the above data on a half-termly, termly, and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in the use of specific codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historical trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance lead will inform the staff about the pupils' attendance and ensure that attendance procedures are followed. Additionally, the attendance lead will monitor the effectiveness of interventions to improve attendance in the future.

The Local Governing Body will regularly review attendance data, including recent and historical trends, to assist the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in setting goals and identifying areas that require attention. The school will also compare its attendance data with local, regional, and national data to determine areas for improvement. Furthermore, the school will share successful practices with other schools.

APPENDIX 1

Information for Parents: Changes to Education-related Penalty Notices:

https://tinyurl.com/37ej4kay

Letter to school leaders on mild illness and school attendance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance

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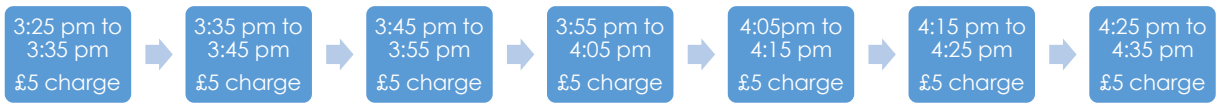
APPENDIX 2 – LATE COLLECTION OF CHILDREN AT HOMETIME

Children must be picked up from school on time. Failure to do so is a form of neglect. Parents and carers should arrange to collect their child at 3:15 pm sharp every day. School entrances open at 3:15 pm for parents/carers to wait at their child's designated collection point. If parents or carers cannot collect their child on time, they must arrange for another responsible adult to collect them and inform the school in advance. Alternatively, they can register their child for the After School Club.

If a child is not collected on time, their teacher will take care of them until their parent or carer arrives. A log will be kept of children who are collected late and the time of their collection. Parents and carers who persistently collect their children late will face penalties.

Incident	Penalty
First occasion	Warning issued by teacher
Second occasion	Warning issued by Assistant/Deputy Headteacher
Third occasion	Warning letter issued by Headteacher
Fourth occasion	Charge incurred (see below)

Charges



For every 10-minute window entered, an additional £5 will be added to the charge. For example, if a child were collected at 3:52 p.m., the total charge would be £15; if a child were collected late at 4:31 p.m., the total charge would be £35.

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APPENDIX 3 – ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY: FAQs FOR PARENTS/CARERS

Attendance

1. My child cannot attend school today; what should I do?

You should ring the school as soon as possible to inform them of the absence and the reason. We require this in writing either by replying to the absence message sent, or by emailing.

2. Do I have to provide evidence of a medical appointment?

Yes, this can be in the form of an appointment letter, email or prescription. Failure to do so could result in an unauthorised absence.

3. I have been told I need medical evidence but cannot get a GP appointment, or I can only get a phone consultation; what should I do?

- Go to the pharmacy and ask for a consultation or advice and get a note stamped with the date
- and time or a receipt of medication with the date on.
- Go to a walk-in centre.
- Ask the receptionist for a printout of your phone consultation/appointment.

4. My child has sickness and diarrhoea, and I cannot take them to the GP; how can I provide medical evidence?

You need to go to the pharmacy, pick up medication for the symptoms, and provide a copy of the receipt to school.

5. Can I take my child out of school for a medical appointment?

All efforts should be made to avoid non-urgent medical or routine dental appointments during the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school before and after the appointment.

6. My child has been ill for over three days; what should I do?

If your child is off for three or more days, medical evidence may be required to authorise the absence. Please refer to the NHS guidance.

7. Can I take my child out of school for religious reasons?

On some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside holiday periods or weekends. In these instances, authorisation of absence or special leave for religious observance will be considered. Still, families are requested to give advance notice if they intend for their child to be absent. If authorisation is permitted, one day will be designated for an occasion.

8. What is an unauthorised absence?

Unauthorised absences are those the school does not consider reasonable and may be subject to penalty notices or legal proceedings issued by the Local Authority.

9. What would class as an unauthorised absence?

- Truancy during the academy day.

- Absences which have no proper explanation.
- Persistent absence due to illness that has no supporting medical evidence.
- Pupils who arrive late after the registers have closed.
- Absence for shopping, looking after other children or celebrating birthdays.
- Families keeping children away from school unnecessarily.
- Excessive absence due to medical/dental appointments without good reason or evidence.
- Passport meetings/appointments.
- Optician appointments.

10. Can I take my child out of school on holiday?

No, this will be unauthorised, resulting in a penalty notice issued by the local council.

11. I want to take my child out of school for a prolonged period; will this be allowed?

This will be granted only in exceptional circumstances and never exceeding 20 days. Requests of this nature should be made in writing to the Headteacher for consideration via the leave of absence form.

12. The school rejected my request to take my child out of school for a prolonged period; what happens now? If the request is rejected and you still take your child out of school, the Local Authority will issue a penalty notice. If you exceed 20 school days, the school has a legal duty to off-roll your child.

13. I have received a letter warning that my child will be off rolled; what does this mean?

If your child is absent for 21 consecutive school days, they will be off rolled; this means they are no longer a member of The Quill C of E Trust, and you will be required to reapply through the council.

14. Is there any support to help improve my child's attendance?

There are occasions when parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss their child's attendance. Here, support measures will be implemented, including attendance contracts, which are formal agreements between parents and the school where targets are set. Parents will also be offered an Early Help Assessment.

15. What is an Early Help Assessment?

An Early Help Assessment considers the family's needs and potential barriers to the child's attendance; it allows for intensive support to be provided by the school, Local Authority, or another partner, such as a health professional.

Punctuality

1. My child was only a couple of minutes late. It seems harsh that they should get a late mark.

The school must abide by the rules and expectations for all schools. Being late for school (or work) is failing to arrive on time and will be marked as such. We encourage pupils to set off in good time so that any slight delay does not cause them to be late.

2. Our whole family overslept; it is not my child's fault that they are late. Will they receive a late mark?

This cannot be taken as an acceptable reason for lateness, so a late mark or unauthorised absence would be recorded, depending on what time they arrive.

3. My child relies on public transport to get to school, which is sometimes late. Will they receive a late mark?

Yes. We advise the child to leave earlier so that they will still arrive on time even if the bus is late. If the bus is sometimes late, it is not a reliable way to ensure a timely arrival.

4. What if I phone up/email to say my child will be late? Would they still get a late mark?

Yes, they would still be marked late.

5. What do I do if I disagree with your Attendance and Punctuality Policy?

Much of our attendance policy is designed to satisfy DfE regulations. Still, if you feel an approach needs to be more fair or reasonable, write to the Headteacher and/or Governing Body for a review. However, whilst any such policy is in place, the school will operate as stated.