



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Introduction

St. Bede's unashamedly sets high standards and has high expectations for Attendance and Punctuality. We believe that when pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly and being punctual, they are able to achieve their full educational potential and learn a fundamental life skill to prepare them for their life beyond St Bede's.

Good attendance and punctuality are not only a legal requirement but essential in order for pupils to get the most out of their experience at St Bede's; including their academic progress, wellbeing and wider life chances. It is important for their personal health and wellbeing and will support them to form strong friendships within the school community. Pupils who attend school every day will have more opportunities to take part in curriculum enrichment activities, extra-curricular experiences, and school trips.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance [parental-responsibility measures](#) on school attendance . These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

[THE EDUCATION ACT 1996](#)

[THE EDUCATION ACT 2002](#)

[THE EDUCATION AND INSPECTORS ACT 2006](#)

[THE EDUCATION \(PUPIL REGISTRATION\) \(ENGLAND\) REGULATIONS 2006 \(2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 AMMENDMENTS\)](#)

[THE EDUCATION \(PENALTY NOTICES\) \(ENGLAND\) \(AMMENDMENT\) REGULATIONS 2013](#)

It also refers to:

[SCHOOL CENSUS GUIDANCE](#)

[KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION](#)

[MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AFFECTING PUPIL'S ATTENDANCE - SCHOOL GUIDANCE](#)

## Parental Responsibility

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/guardians to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education and are responsible for the child's school attendance and punctuality. As a parent you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends school regularly and on time. This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, for example if your child is too ill to attend school.

When your child is away from school, the learning they miss will significantly have an effect on their future learning and it is difficult for them to catch up on missed learning time. Educational research shows that attendance is directly linked to your child's academic progress and poor attendance means that your child will not achieve as successfully if they are not in school.

Some children are at times reluctant to come to school. If there are any problems with regular attendance, parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together.

## School's Responsibility

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by school, [not by the parent/carer] as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as illness or other unavoidable causes. However, the **unavoidable cause must relate to the child**.

**Unauthorised absences** are those for which school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. These include:

1. Leave of Absence that has not been approved by the school
2. School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence
3. Truancy before or during the school day
4. Any holiday not approved by the Headteacher
5. Children who arrive at school, without good reason, after the registers have been closed at 9.00am
6. Medical evidence requested by school has not been provided
7. No explanation has been provided by the parent/carer

## Procedures

### Illness and other legitimate reasons

- If a pupil is unfit for school, parents/carers should contact the school on each day of absence unless alternative arrangements have been made with the school, for example a pupil in hospital: absences will not be authorised without this procedure being followed. Parent/Carer can ring the absence line on **01254 203803 from 8am or text anytime on 07860 003916** to report an absence.
- In exceptional circumstances, medical evidence may be requested.
- Other reasons for absence must be discussed with school each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing authorisation of absence.
- Leave may however be granted in an emergency, bereavement or for medical appointments; however parents/carers are encouraged to arrange such appointments after school hours or during the holidays.
- Unexplained absence cannot be authorised.
- Explanations, unless in exceptional circumstances, received after 14 school days of a pupils return to school, will not be accepted.

### Holidays

- A leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time will only be granted in "special and exceptional circumstances". This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. An application form for discretionary leave of absence must be completed and returned to school in advance - see Appendix 3.

- Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of the agreed time period, will be classed as unauthorised and may incur a penalty notice - see Appendix 2.

### Attendance concerns

School will monitor attendance and follow the protocols highlighted below:

- Contact parents/carers via phone call or text if attendance is becoming a concern
- Arrange meetings to offer support and improvement strategies
- Issue Attendance Improvement Contracts
- Conduct home visits
- Refer to the Inclusion Team at the Local Authority if all other attempts to improve attendance have been unsuccessful

### Persistent absence

- Any pupils with attendance below 90% are classed as being 'persistently absent' by the DfE
- Any pupils with attendance below 50% are classed as 'severely persistently absent' by the DfE
- Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence for absence if their child is below 90%.
- If a child has eight or more unauthorised sessions, they may be referred to the Inclusion Officer which may lead to a penalty notice being issued or be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.
- The Inclusion Officer can also provide advice and support to help address issues affecting attendance.
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**School Actions** - see Appendix 1

**Legal Action** - see Appendix 2

### Reporting to the Local Authority

In accordance with the [WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE](#) guidance, the school will provide the following information to the Local Authority:

- The names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a period of ten school days in any calendar month, where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U).
- A sickness return for all compulsory school age pupils who have been recorded with code I (illness) where a pupil has had 15 days of continuous (or cumulative) absence for illness or where the school believes that they will miss 15 days because of this.

### Punctuality

The school day begins at 8.25am. There are two school entrances: Green Lane and Livesey Branch Road. The gates open at 8.00am and will close at 8.25am when the school bell indicates the start of the school day. If a pupil arrives after 8.25am they must sign in at the

main reception and provide a reason for being late. This will be supervised by a member of staff who will reinforce expectations and the importance of being punctual.

Pupils who arrive after 8.25am will be marked as late using an L code. Pupils who arrive after the registers close at 8.55am will be marked as an unauthorised absence using the U code. Exceptions are when the school's official buses are late and, at the discretion of the Headteacher, in exceptional weather or traffic circumstances.

School will monitor attendance and follow the protocols highlighted below:

- Issue sanctions to pupils who do not have a legitimate reason for being late to school
- Contact parents/carers via phone call or text each time a pupil is late
- Arrange meetings to offer support and improvement strategies
- Issue Punctuality Improvement Contracts

## Home visits

### Reasons home visits may take place:

- To support engagement for those pupils with low attendance or are refusing to attend school
- To engage with families who are unable to attend school for meetings
- To maintain contact with a child who is unable to attend due to a medical condition
- If a reason for absence has not been provided for a child, and all other forms of communication have been unsuccessful
- Where transporting a child to/from home has been agreed

### Informing Parents/Carers

- Visits should normally be pre-arranged and confirmed with parents/carers via phone call or text. Exceptions: safeguarding emergencies or "welfare" checks after prolonged unexplained absence
- All school staff will carry school ID and introduce themselves clearly and explain the reason for the visit

## Child Missing in Education (CME)

This applies to pupils who:

- Have been absent for 10 consecutive days and school have been unable to establish their whereabouts following all reasonable enquiries
- Have relocated and a forwarding school or new home address remains unknown following reasonable enquiries undertaken by the school
- Are not believed to be registered at any school nor receiving a suitable education otherwise than at school

School will make reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts including home visits. A CME form will be completed and referral to the Local Authority will be made.

## Rewards

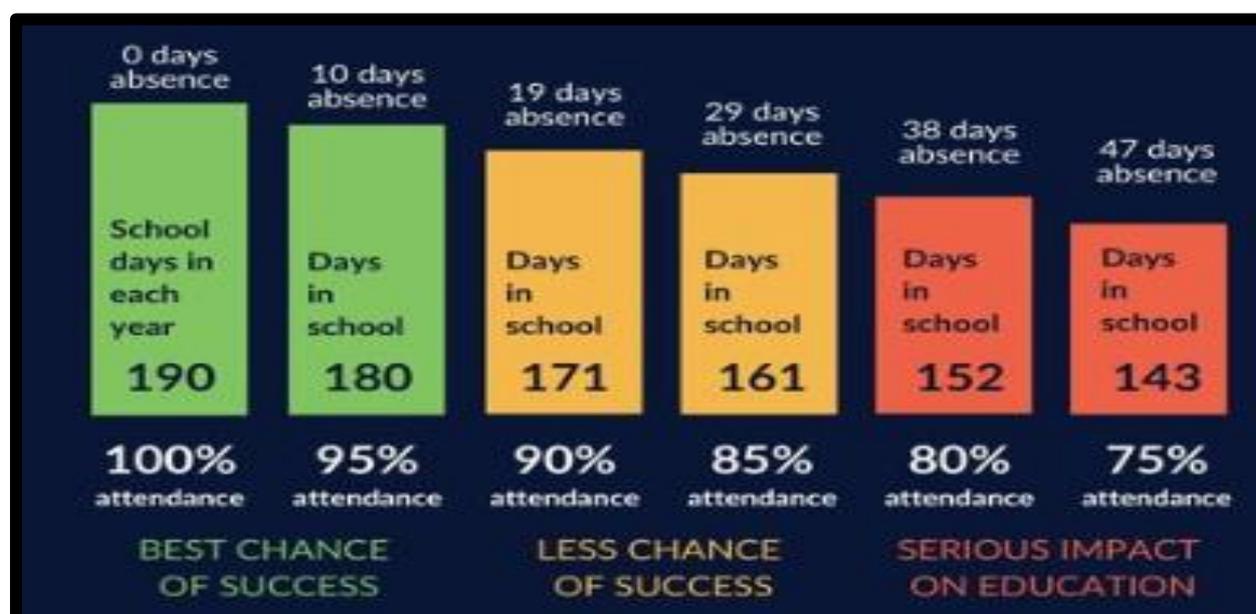
There is a reward system in place for pupils with excellent attendance, and incentives for improvement of pupils with a poor attendance record. Attendance is also integrated into the Bede's reward system and will be considered for all school trips and the Year 11 Prom.

## Attendance Matters

“Just one day off” can soon add up...

95% attendance over the academic year equates to 10 school days absence. This is 2 full weeks of missed learning.

90% attendance over the academic year is equal to 1 day off every 2 weeks. This is over 3 school weeks of missed learning



## GCSE outcomes for good attenders:

									Performance Indicator	Attendance
1			9	61.00	0.0	0.0	100.0	2.34	99.03	
2			9	57.00	0.0	0.0	100.0	2.94	99.68	
3			9	43.00	11.1	0.0	100.0	2.74	100	
4			10	75.00	10.0	0.0	100.0	2.53	100	
5			10	80.00	10.0	0.0	100.0	2.40	100	
6			10	77.00	0.0	0.0	100.0	2.34	100	
7			9	49.00	33.3	0.0	100.0	2.08	98.71	
8			10	58.00	0.0	0.0	100.0	2.18	100	
9			10	75.00	10.0	0.0	100.0	2.54	100	
10			11	96.00	10.0	0.0	100.0	2.67	99.35	

Top 10 achieving pupils –

Mean attendance: **99.7%**

## GCSE outcomes for poor attenders:

									Performance Indicator	Attendance	
167			9	36.00	4.06	-0.5	11.1	88.9	100.0	-1.47	95.48
168			9	27.00	2.00	-0.2	11.1	88.9	100.0	-1.26	92.26
169			9	24.00	2.67	-0.2	11.1	88.9	100.0	-1.45	98.71
170			9	27.00	2.06	-7.4	11.1	88.9	100.0	-1.73	100
171			9	29.00	2.78	-7.1	11.1	88.9	100.0	-1.88	89.35
172			8	12.75	1.89	-7.7	0.0	100.0	100.0	-1.88	100
173			7	15.00	2.04	-6.5	0.0	100.0	100.0	-1.98	69.35
174			8	12.00	1.80	-7.3	12.8	87.8	100.0	-2.07	96.11
175			6	16.75	1.79	-9.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	-1.22	61.94
176			9	26.00	3.22	-12.1	0.0	100.0	100.0	-1.47	85.48

Bottom 10 achieving pupils

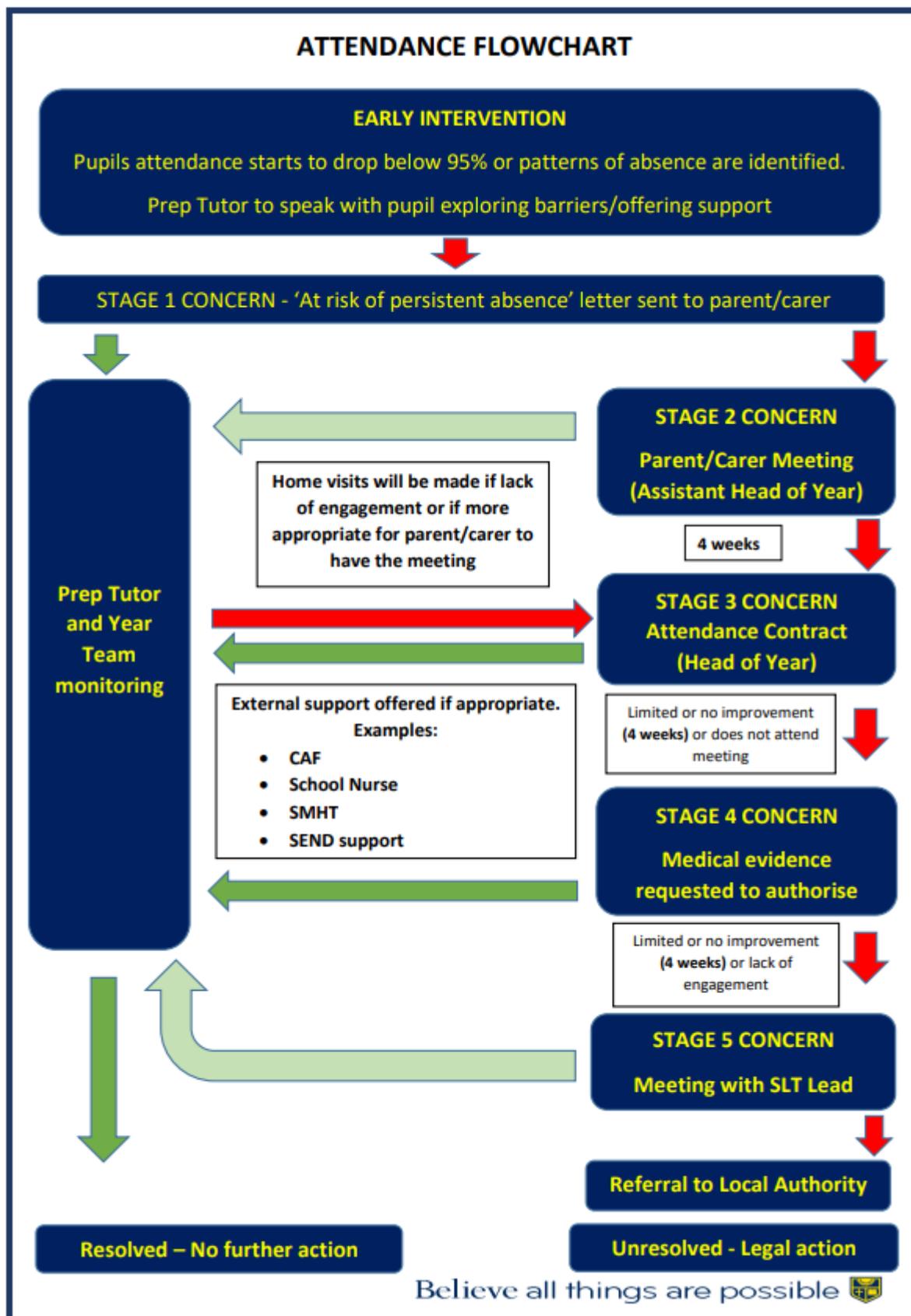
Mean attendance: **88.9%**

## Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and to promote good attendance of 95% or above. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their children attend regularly. Staff in school are committed to working with parents/carers in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

**Responsibility for monitoring attendance**

Mr D Milton - Headteacher  
Miss N O'Toole- Deputy Headteacher  
Mrs J Wilson - Attendance Officer  
Behaviour for Learning and Welfare Team  
Prep Tutors  
School Inclusion Officer



## APPENDIX 2 - PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The Department of Education has recently announced national changes to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised absences during term time. These are effective from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

### 1. FIRST OFFENCE

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for **Term Time Leave** or **Irregular Attendance** the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

### 2. SECOND OFFENCE

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for **Term Time Leave** or **Irregular Attendance** the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered.

### 3. THIRD OFFENCE AND ANY FURTHER OFFENCES (WITHIN THREE YEARS)

The third time an offence is committed for **Term Time Leave** or **Irregular Attendance** a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented to the Magistrates Court and fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty can show up on a parent's future DBS certificate due to failure to safeguard a child's education

## 10 SESSIONS (5 DAYS) OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE IN A 10-WEEK PERIOD

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.

*Pupils who are late after 9.00am will receive a 'U' code which is classed as an unauthorised absence*

Please follow the link for the Department of Education's 'Working together to improve school attendance' statutory guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Children's Service and  
Education Directorate



Inclusion Team

UPN

## APPLICATION FOR DISCRETIONARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_ DFE Number \_\_\_\_\_

If you wish to request discretionary leave of absence for your child, please complete this application form and return it to the Headteacher as soon as possible and in advance of making any travel arrangements. Please note that there is no entitlement in law for parents to take their children out of school during term time without first obtaining permission from school.

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (For full details please see code C1)
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable. (For full details please see part-time timetable) 18

**Exceptional circumstances:** All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

If you do take your child out of school without securing advance permission or he/she fails to return to school on the agreed due date, you are likely to be issued with a Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Fines will be issued in accordance with the National framework for penalty notices and the local code of conduct.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead.

This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

### EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS, AND EVERY DAY IS IMPORTANT

Child's First Name	Child's Surname	D.o.B.	Year Group	Gender
				Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>

Parent (s) / Carer (s)			
First Name		First Name	
Surname		Surname	
Relationship to Child		Relationship to Child	
Address		Address	
Contact Telephone		Contact Telephone	
Email Address		Email Address	

Request Details				
Reason for Request				
Destination (City & Country)				
Date of Departure		Date due back in School		Number of missed school days
Emergency contact in Blackburn with Darwen (inc. contact number)				
Parent/Carer's Signature		Date Request made		
School Section				
Date of meeting/conversation with parent/carer		Leave Authorised	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Exceptional circumstances considered				
Head teacher's/Principal's signature		Date		

For absences of 10 days or more please forward this form prior to the child's departure to [education.welfare@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:education.welfare@blackburn.gov.uk)