

Herringthorpe Valley Road

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Principal: Andrew Riding

10th September 2025

Dear parent/carers

We were very excited to welcome pupils back to school last week and I have enjoyed seeing our new Year 7 cohort settling into life at St Bernard's. We have been especially impressed with our pupils' uniform and the positive way in which they have started the new academic year, and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your support with this.

During the first week, Mrs Graham and I met with all pupils to outline our expectations for the year with a focus on attendance, which is so important. You may be aware of the news headlines over the last two weeks which outlined national concerns over pupil attendance to school. The Department for Education shared data highlighting the significant impact of missing school in the first week back following the summer holidays with more than half of pupils who missed some of the first week in 2024 becoming "persistently absent" compared with just 14% of pupils who fully attended the first week.

A child who is deemed persistently absent misses 10% or more of the academic year which is equivalent to over 19 days off school and around 100 hours or more of missed lessons. The article also shared the dramatic increase in pupils being persistently absent since the Covid pandemic.

Please find below the interventions in place to prevent your child from becoming a persistent absentee:

Level of Intervention	Type of Intervention
Level 1	-Attendance Officer to contact home
Level 2	-Pastoral wellbeing check undertaken by Form Tutor, Head of House or Head of Year
Level 3	-Attendance concern letter sent
Level 4	-Meeting with the Attendance Team -Notice to Improve letter sent with support/actions agreed from the local authority
Level 5	-Fixed Penalty Notice -Attendance Team support

Early Help intervention may be offered at any level in this process

Missing four weeks or more of school not only has a detrimental impact on a child's academic achievement and post 16 pathway choices, but more importantly their sense of belonging in school. We therefore want to ensure we reward excellent attendance whilst working closely with you to understand any barriers to attendance a pupil may be experiencing. If you have any questions regarding attendance, please do not hesitate to make contact with us.



I also wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's statutory guidance which outlines that any pupil who has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (including holidays) in a ten-week period will be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80 per parent. For second offences of unauthorised term time absence (including holidays) in a ten-week rolling period, a second penalty notice will be issued of £160 per parent.

We strongly discourage pupils missing school due to family holidays and visits, however, if you are requesting a leave of absence, then parents/carers must complete the leave of absence request form which is located on our website, available from reception or found on the following link <https://forms.gle/HZBvEoqyWjzFHY1C8>. These absences will be categorised as unauthorised and are likely to result in you receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice.

I look forward to meeting you all during this academic year and thank you once again for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mr Riding
Headteacher
St Bernard's Catholic High School