

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

<b>Date of last review:</b>	July 2019	<b>Review Period:</b>	2 years
<b>Date of next review:</b>	July 2021	<b>Owner:</b>	Principal
<b>Type of policy:</b>	School	<b>LAB or Trust Approved:</b>	LAB

# Attendance Policy

## Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored regularly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. 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.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils. We encourage children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

The Governors and Principal, in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

## Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child who should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines a child's education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk. The school share the attendance percentage with parents at each parents' consultation meeting and more frequently where there are concerns.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that your child is safe.**

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.45am and 9.00am, when the doors are open and children go to class. All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office where they are registered and the reason for lateness is recorded.

## Illness and Medical Appointments

If a child cannot attend school, parents are required to contact the school and leave a message on the absence line (01929 462744) before 9.30am. Parents / carers are required to call on the first day of a child's absence. If a reason for a child's absence is not received, then the school will try and contact parents to find out why their child is not in school. Should we be unable to contact a parent, we may ask the Education Social Worker to carry out a visit.

- a) Routine/non-emergency dental or medical appointments should be made outside school hours where possible.
- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is required for all appointments within school hours.
- c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- d) If your child is absent due to vomiting and/or diarrhoea, they should not return to school for the **next 48 hours** after the last bout of sickness/diarrhoea. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

e) If your child is absent for four days or more, the school will require medical evidence to support the reason for absence. The school office will request this if it is not produced. If no medical evidence is provided, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

## **The Role of the School Staff**

The Leadership team has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. Pupil attendance is monitored regularly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the school attendance team to ensure:

Attendance and lateness records are up to date.

If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence to obtain the reason.

Where it is not possible to make contact, the absence is recorded as unauthorised. The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register.

## **Action for Low Attendance**

96%+ Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

94-95%

Average – Strive to build on this. Work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to 96%+

90-93%

Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School contact parents directly to highlight poor attendance and seek ways of working together to improve attendance.

Below 90%

Unacceptable – Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Attendance below 90% is classed as Persistent Absence, which is reported half termly to the Local Authority. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called. If improvement is not achieved a referral is made to the Attendance Service – Education Social Worker (ESW) and a Penalty Notice considered where absence is not authorised.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

a) In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

b) Prior to the engagement of the Education Social Worker, the school may issue letters/emails to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's attendance. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for ESW involvement.

## **Children Missing Education**

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Principal must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the local authority Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

## **Lateness**

The class register is taken at 9.00am and at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after 9.00am must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded.

The register will close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration. This national code counts as an unauthorised absence. Lateness affects the child's overall attendance percentage.

Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at parent consultations, attendance meetings and may be referred to the Education Social Worker (ESW). Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

## **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

Parents will be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning from the Local Authority if their child is persistently late to school (after the registers have closed at 9.15am). Persistent is defined as a minimum of 5 late arrivals within 5 weeks. The absences do not need to be consecutive.

## **Definitions**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either

### **AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.**

This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer within the correct timeframe. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Principal.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given. This includes:

Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily  
Absences that have never been properly explained.  
Holidays not agreed.

### **Authorising Absence**

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, Principals/Headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In considering whether or not to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time, the Principal/Headteacher will look at each individual case and only grant

authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional. Additionally, any request should be made prior to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school using the 'Request for Leave of Absence form' (available from the school office). Parents/Carers may be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 'Unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. As a general guide, the following indicates the type of scenarios that might be considered as 'exceptional':

- Immediate family member returning home from Service Duty;
- Immediate family weddings or funerals (if abroad, only the actual day of the wedding/funeral);
- Occasions of religious observance;
- Other situations where a 'compassionate' element is applicable.

Generally, the following scenarios cannot be considered 'exceptional':

- Annual family holidays;
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time;
- Family birthdays or other events;
- Parents' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays.

Following an application for term time absence, parents/carers will be notified of the Principal's/Headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional then the absence cannot be authorised and the school may need to request that the Local Authority issues a Fixed Penalty Notice. In considering whether to request a Penalty Notice, the school will have due regard to the latest policy from Dorset County Council that can be found here:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/at-school/school-attendance.aspx>

It is important for parents/carers to note that once Bovington Academy have requested that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a period of unauthorised leave in term time, you will not have an opportunity to discuss this matter further with the Local Authority. Any queries or discussions should be had prior to, or at the time of requesting the leave.