



Bournville Village Primary School Attendance and Absence Policy

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Statutory

Reviewed by: Pupil & Staff Welfare/FGB Committee

Approved by: Pupil & Staff Welfare/FGB Committee

Signed:	Chair of Committee:	Date:
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OUR MISSION:

To prioritise our attendance, aiming ultimately for all our children to be in school all the time.

At Bournville Village Primary School we believe that attendance and punctuality are vital for a child to maximise their potential and create a feeling of belonging in their class/school community. We know that the key to addressing attendance is to understand the root of the problem. Therefore, we are committed to building trusted relationships with our children and their families – comprising parents, carers and anyone acting in the capacity of parent or carer – to ensure we improve attendance and always aim for 100%.

In promoting the belief that attendance and punctuality are important values we will be helping to equip our children for life and potentially impacting upon their futures as employees and employers.

We believe that;

- Prolonged and consistent absence affects access to the curriculum, ultimately impacting on progress.
- Repeated and consistent lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school.
- It's every child's right to attend school.
- No child should feel that they need to miss school to support their family.

Our school will use all available resources to reduce absences from school.

The DfE documentation 'Reducing Absence – ensuring schools intervene earlier' states that; "The poor attendance of a number of pupils can disrupt their own learning and that of other pupils. The children quickly begin to fall behind their peers and often never fully catch up with gaps in their skills or knowledge." There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

The Government has stated that once a child's overall absence equates to 10% or more, they are classed as persistently absent. In January 2022, the Children's Commissioner team conducted a survey of local authorities in England. Their findings concluded that in Autumn 2021, 1 in 4 children were persistently absent compared to 1 in 9 in 2018/19 - that is more than double. This policy presents the ways in which we will ensure that every Bournville Village Primary School pupil is supported to be in school every day and how we will take steps to know where they are and that they are safe.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a calm, safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusted relationships with pupils and families.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, anti-bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and families.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area and other agencies.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to and receives efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The Deputy Head Teacher (Mrs Amanda Carter) is the attendance lead and can be contacted via attendance@bournvillevillageprimary.org.uk. Staff, families, and pupils will be expected to use this email address for queries or concerns about attendance.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Children Missing from Education Procedure

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies (including supporting the school to take a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing).
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing from Education Procedure in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT as the Attendance Lead.
- Appointing an Attendance Ambassador to be the first point of contact for families.
- Ensuring all families are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and acting as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

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.

The Attendance Ambassador is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and families with regard to attendance.

Pupils are responsible for:

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

Families are responsible for:

- Providing at least two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with families where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to families and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The school day starts at 8.50am, and pupils will be in their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; doors are open at **8.40am** to allow for this. Pupils will have a morning break and a lunch break. Pupils are expected to have returned promptly from each break and be ready to recommence learning.

Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom on time. Pupils attending after the start of the day, but before 9.20am will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.

The morning register will close at **9:20am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.

Attendance register

The school uses online systems to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in 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
- Z = Pupil not on the admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g., induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of the amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment. Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Authorising family absence requests

Families will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by families and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of Absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect families to contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis, and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

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

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. Referrals to the local authority will be considered for all term-time holiday requests for leave, over 10 sessions (5 days). See Appendix 1 for more information. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Families will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, families will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Families are responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Families will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks in advance where this is possible.

The school will only accept requests from families for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's family would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's family belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the family will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHCPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, the family will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities, and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement. To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through an Early Help Assessment.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.

- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need a time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or one-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

What we do when a child is absent

If a child is ill and is too poorly to come to school, the family must contact the school office via telephone or via email at attendance@bournvillevillageprimary.org.uk as soon as possible but before **9:30am** on the morning of their child's absence. The absence will then be marked as 'I' for authorised absence due to illness.

Families are asked to inform school on each day of absence.

Where a pupil is absent and the family has not contacted the school by **9.30am** we will seek to make contact by telephone.

If we receive no response, we will send a text message and/ or email reminding the family to call school. We will also try to contact the other contacts for the child listed on our records.

If we have no reason for an absence and this causes concern (for example, if we feel there may be a safeguarding issue or the child is on our persistent absentee list), we will conduct a home visit so that we can see the child.

In response to any unknown absence, we will exhaust all avenues to establish that a child is safe and well.

Working with families to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance, and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will use knowledge of individual children and families and attendance data to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

If absence or a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance team, pastoral team, SLT and class-based staff will work collaboratively with the pupil and their family to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches. Working with families may include strategies as set out below.

Letter sent home/phone call offer to meet with member of the attendance team.
Meeting in school/home- talk to pupil and family– establish barriers- what would help?
Involvement of Pastoral Team.
Targets set and plan for a review.
Diarised review- check on attendance percentage If no improvement, support programme discussed and set up.
If Targets not met- offer of Early Help

Where barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g., bullying, the attendance team will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g., the DSL and Pastoral staff; to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g., they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance team and pastoral team will provide support from school where possible and also liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g., children's social care or the LA, and will encourage families to access support that they may need.

The attendance team will provide half-termly reports to families to ensure they are aware of their child's rates of attendance and punctuality. Rates of attendance will be shared using boundaries aligned with DfE expectations.

% Attendance	Banding
95% -100%	Expected
90%- 94.9%	Persistently Absent- Level 1
80%- 89.9%	Persistently Absent- Level 2
79.9% - 50.1%	Persistently Absent- Level 3
50% or less	Severely Persistently Absent- Level 4

Persistent Absence

At Bournville Village Primary School we are aware of the various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and Persistent Absence, such as young carers, pupils with EAL or pupils with SEND. The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of Persistent Absence to attend school. These include:

- Meeting with pupils and families to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHCP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 20% and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of Persistent Absence is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g., social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the attendance team will consider the following:

- Holding a formal meeting with the family and the school's point of contact in the LA School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will consider the use of a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.