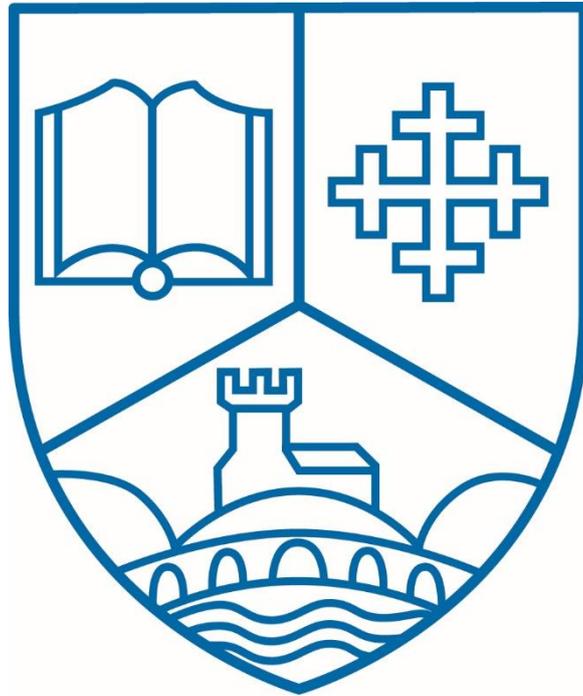


**BIDFORD ON AVON  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**Attendance Policy**

**Dec 2023**

**Review date – September 2024**

At Bidford on Avon C. of E. Primary School we proactively manage and promote good attendance across the school community, as part of our dedication to provide high quality educational. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and to give them the best start in life.

To ensure an effective attendance strategy we set high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, systematically analyses their data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts and work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance. We recognise that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive. To manage and improve attendance effectively we:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils.

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 on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## **1. Roles and responsibilities**

The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets. There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who has regular contact with the headteacher as part of the monitoring and review process.

The headteacher and senior leadership team ensure that the governing body's objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data, surfacing trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

### **Governors**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the strategic direction and importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Approve attendance targets
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

## **Headteacher**

The headteacher, in partnership with the senior leadership team is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Leading attendance across the school
- Monitoring and evaluating absence data and defined groups
- Supporting staff with monitoring and evaluating the attendance of individual pupils
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Sets whole school attendance targets each year
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families (see appendix)
- Reporting to governors school-level absence data and defined groups
- Providing regular reminders to parents about the expectations for good attendance and the impact of school absence
- Engaging with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend school
- Reviewing term time leave of absence requests and where necessary referrals to the LA

## **Teachers and school staff**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Ensuring that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- Ensuring that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance processes
- Recording attendance twice daily (a.m. and p.m.) using the correct codes and submitting this to the office
- Contributing to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- Working with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance

## **School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Record on the school system reasons for absence
- Transfer calls from parents to the headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Follow up on unreported absence on a day-to-day basis by phoning parents or carers
- Maintain a list of parental/ carer contact numbers/ email addresses to support good communications

## **Parents and carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:45 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- Not take children out of school for holidays during term time

## **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- Speak to their teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance

## **2. Recording attendance**

### **Attendance register**

We keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

*See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.*

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not, where pupils are of compulsory school age
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

- Pupils must arrive in school by on 8:55am each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:25. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:30 and will be kept open until 2:00

### **2.1 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

Parents can contact the school via the phone line, by email, via the Gateway APP or in writing (yellow reporting forms are available in the school lobby)

We will mark absence due to illness as authorized, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Children should not attend school if they are unwell. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **2.2 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 3 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Leave of absence request forms are available from the school office.

## 2.3 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the (L) code
- After the register has closed will be marked as late after the register has closed, using the (U) code
- Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers.
- If the concerns persist, the Head teacher or Head of School will write to the parents/carers using the appended letter about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.
- If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to WAS.

## 2.4. Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will phone again later in the day or in the case of vulnerable pupils contact their social worker.
- If the unreported absence continues on following days the school will use social media; contact other known relations, friends or neighbours; contact other schools (where an older sibling may be registered); visit the home; contact social care

## 2.5. Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly parent consultations and via the termly provision of attendance certificates and in the Summer time and end of year report.

# 3. Authorised and unauthorised absence

## 3.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Government issued regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not grant any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice

- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilonattendance>)
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### **3.2 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **4. Strategies for promoting attendance**

School will utilise the following ways to promote and reward good or improving attendance.

- Termly attendance certificate for each class and rewards for the highest attendance
- Reporting attendance regularly in newsletters and on school notice boards
- Providing parents with attendance details on induction to the school

## **5. Attendance monitoring**

The school monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance. The headteacher, with support from the leadership team and office staff use the school information management system (SIMS) and the Fischer Family Trust attendance tracker to collect and review data at whole school, year group, class, pupil group and individual pupil level. This information is used alongside wider pupil data and parental consultation to develop attendance strategies and improve absence.

## 5.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board

## 5.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## 5.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## 5.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Contact parents in writing, with details of the child's absence data and the expectation that attendance will improve
- Contact parents and remind them of their persistent absence on each new absence
- Work with external agencies to support parents in instances of severe absence

## 6. Children missing from education

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Warwickshire County Council's Education and Learning Business Unit at 01926 742036 or via e mail to [cme@warwickshire.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:cme@warwickshire.gcsx.gov.uk).

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 8. Why attendance and punctuality matters

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

Punctuality is also a major factor in how a child progresses. Even just a few minutes late at the start of each day can affect how much your child achieves. The following table highlights the impact a few minutes each day has on your child's learning:

5 minutes late each day	2 teaching days lost	Approximately 0.5 week
10 minutes late each day	6.5 teaching days lost	Approximately 1 week
15 minutes late each day	10 teaching days lost	2 weeks
20 minutes late each day	13 teaching days lost	Approximately 2.5 weeks
30 minutes late each day	19 teaching days lost	Approximately 4 weeks

## **8. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Working together to improve attendance (DFE Sept 2023)

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

### EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



### MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



### LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



### FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



### FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



### ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.