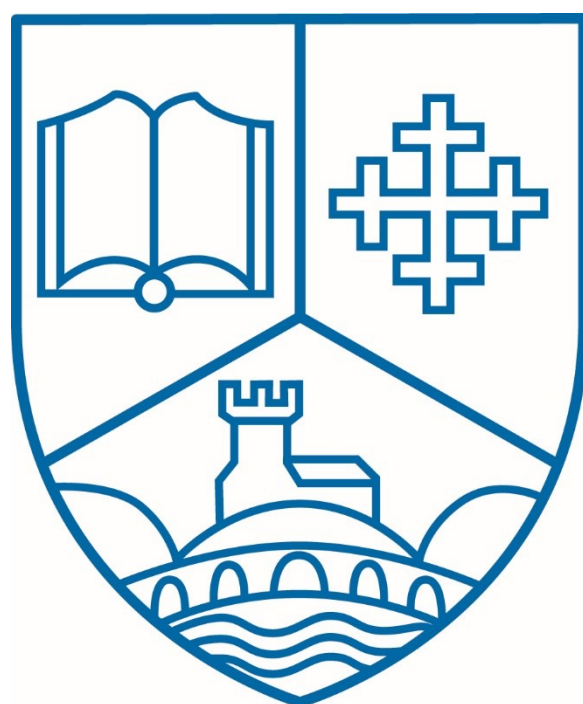


**BIDFORD ON AVON
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



Attendance Policy

October 2022

Review date – October 2023

Bidford on Avon C. of E. Primary School Policy for School Attendance.

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. Bidford School expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. However, children should not attend school if they are unwell.

Aims

- To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents and pupils.
- To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- To provide support and guidance for parents and pupils.
- To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information.
- To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence.
- To promote effective partnership with the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) and other agencies.

Principles

- Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis.
- Every half day absence from school is classified as either authorised or unauthorised
- Authorised absences are morning or afternoons away from school for a good reason – illness, medical appointments, bereavement or other unavoidable reasons.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which leave has not been given.
- Children are expected to be in school on time (by 8.55am) and all late arrivals will be recorded.

Communication

The importance of regular attendance and punctuality is discussed and explained at the Pre-school Induction Meetings held each year for children about to enter Reception Class. This reiterates that parents and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children particularly should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own. Parents are asked to share any worries that their child might have in school.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various Year Groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Head Teacher. At this meeting, the importance of regular attendance and punctuality is always highlighted, together with other school routines. During induction meetings and in newsletters parents are informed that term time holidays will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances and that any unauthorised holiday taken may result in a penalty notice.

When a child is unable to attend school parents should contact the school on the first day before 9:15a.m. by phone, note or by calling in (we do not accept email messages for absence). When a pupil is absent without information given to the school the school will contact the parents. If there is a concern about their absence the school will contact the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) or children's services.

A medical note may be requested in the case of repeated doctor or hospital visits in school time.

Where parents/ carers are experiencing difficulties in bringing their child to school they should contact the school at an early stage so that the school can help support them in resolving the problem.

Where issues are unresolved the school may refer to children's services and the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS). Persistent absence can result in a criminal prosecution.

Categories of Absence:

There are two categories of absence:

- (i) Authorised (approved)
- (ii) Unauthorised (not approved)

Absences can only be authorised by the Headteacher (or designated member of staff).

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. For example, if the child has been unwell and the parents telephones the school to explain the absence and follows up in writing.

Only the school can authorise an absence, parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, an absence can be unauthorised even if the child is absent with the support of a parent i.e. Leave of Absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

A child arriving after the close of registers without good reason and truancy will also be classified as an unauthorised absence.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

The Government issued new 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/pupilnonattendance>).
- 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.

We understand that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance. The following circumstances are examples of leave that will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Illness

All parents must contact school if their child will be absent or late. A telephone call is acceptable; a book is kept in the office to record any late arrivals. If no notification is received about a child’s absence, the school Attendance Officer contacts the parent/guardian requesting a reason for the absence. If no reason is given the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence for an absence where necessary and if it is not provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical appointments

All medical appointments should be confirmed before the date with a letter, phone call or via the office. A medical note may be requested as proof of appointment and if this is not provided the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Registration

Bidford School uses a manual entry registration system and the Register is completed in the morning and afternoon at 8.55am and 1.30pm. A pupil will receive a late mark if they arrive after 8.55am but before close of registration at 9.25am. Any late arrival after 9.25am will be marked as unauthorised. All pupils who are late must report to the office.

Monitoring

The school attendance officer is responsible for collating and analysing attendance and punctuality records in school and notifies the Senior Leadership Team if there is any reason for concern. As a result the Head Teacher may write to the parents/guardians offering the opportunity to discuss any

issues. Persistent attendance issues will be reported to WAS. We report termly absence information to parents and offer opportunities to discuss any concerns. At the end of the year, each child's attendance is reported to parents with their child's School Report. We monitor attendance of those pupils who are absent from school because of short-term or chronic illness, and close links are maintained with parents. School continues to provide as much education as the child's medical condition allows to keep up the momentum of their learning.

Information on authorised and unauthorised absence rates is set out in the School Prospectus and is included in OFSTED reports. Class attendance figures are reported to parents via the school newsletter and class attendance certificates are displayed termly in school. Additional information from the Department for Education about the harmful effect of school absence is included below:

- If a school can improve their attendance by 1%, they will see a 5-6% improvement in attainment.
- If a child attends school 90% of the time, this is still well below the National requirements – and 90% attendance actually means missing one half of a school day every week!! ...Or all of February in one school year!!
- If 10 days are taken out of school for a family holiday – this automatically lowers your child's attendance to 94.7% for the year.
- If for whatever reason, your child missed an average of one day a week for their whole time in school...this would actually add up to missing the equivalent of two years schooling or not starting school until you were 7!

100% attendance	190 school days	Excellent	The very best chance of success for your child
95% attendance	180 school days	Good	Best chance of success for your child
90% attendance	171 school days	Worrying	Less chance of success for your child
85% attendance	161 school days	Concerning	Less chance of success for your child
80% attendance	152 school days	Serious concern	Possible Court action!
Less than 80%	School needs to take action!		

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

This policy was reviewed by the Governors in October 2022 and will be reviewed in October 2023.