



Bowesfield
Primary School

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Attendance Policy

Date approved by Governing Body: 17.9.20.
Review Date: September 2021

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 28 (right to education)

“Every child has the right to an education.”

Article 29 (goals of education)

“Education must develop every child’s personality, talents and abilities to the full.”

As adults, we are duty bearers, who must ensure that children are supported in accessing their rights.

It is the legal duty of those with parental responsibility to ensure their child’s regular attendance at school.

A parent means:

- *All natural parents, whether they are married or not;*
- *Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,*
- *Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.*

DFE School attendance parental responsibility measures January 2015

Responsibilities

School will ensure the following:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parent /carer when a pupil fails to attend school – and no reason has already been provided (safeguarding).
- Prompt and confidential action to address any identified problems.
- Rewards for good and significantly improved attendance and punctuality.

We expect parents/carers to ensure:

- Their child attends school each day on time (ready to start at 8.50 a.m.)
- They contact school on their child’s first day of absence, advising of reasons for absence by 8.45 a.m.
- They provide medical evidence for absence if their child’s attendance falls below 96% so that absence can be authorised.
- They provide emergency contact details for a minimum of 2 people – so that we can contact home if a child is absent

We expect that children:

- Attend school each day.
- Arrive on time
- Inform a member of staff of any problems they are experiencing which may affect their ability to attend school and access their education.

Tackling absence

First day of absence: If there has been no contact from home by 9.00 a.m. the Pastoral Support Adviser rings families to confirm the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If there is no reply, they will then text home the same day requesting a phone call to school.

If no response is received, a home visit will be made the same day to ensure the child's safety and the absence will be unauthorised if there is no valid reason.

Longer absences: If a child has been absent for 3 days, the Pastoral Support Adviser makes a follow up call to see how they are and when they will be well enough to return to school.

Every fortnight, the PSA will check any children whose attendance from October falls below 96% (national average 2018-19).

Their parents will be informed that any absences can only be authorised if they provide medical evidence. This can be a prescription (with date corresponding to absence), an appointment card or letter, or a note from a medical professional.

Due to COVID-19, we understand that it may be more difficult to families to get access to GP appointments and are clearly giving the message to families that their child should not attend if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Therefore each child with attendance below 96% will be considered on an individual basis with an individual note added to their letter as appropriate.

Every six weeks, a SIMS report is run to identify any children with 10 or more unauthorised absences within the previous 8 school weeks.

These children will be referred to the Local Authority for an LA warning letter. If, within a monitoring period, they have any further unauthorised absence, they may be issued with a penalty notice or be invited to an Attendance Case Conference in line with LA policy.

Tackling lateness

Punctuality is monitored daily within class and fortnightly by the Pastoral Support Adviser. Children who arrive on time are included in a raffle draw at the end of the day.

Families are contacted on a fortnightly basis if their child is regularly late (more than 3 times in 2 weeks).

Monitoring attendance

Encouraging and monitoring attendance is an integral part of the pastoral duties of each class teacher. They have primary responsibility for monitoring the attendance of children in the class, for collecting notes explaining absences, for discussing attendance with parents / carers and for maintaining an accurate register.

Office staff / teachers must add comments (e.g. a record of a verbal message from a parents / carer or a record of attempts to contact the family re absence)

on SIMS and initial their comments. Notes from parents / carers are kept by the office.

If a teacher has concerns about a child's attendance, these should be discussed with the Pastoral Support Adviser.

Each child's attendance is monitored fortnightly from the start of the autumn term. This is done by identifying children whose attendance is below 96%.

A letter is sent to families to tell them that their child's attendance is below 96% and we require evidence of illness or appointments in order to be able to authorise absence.

Next steps

If attendance and / or punctuality improve to at least 96%, this will be recognised by school and no further action will be taken.

If no improvement is made and attendance falls below 90% with recent unauthorised absences the PSA will make an appointment to address concerns by telephone or in person as appropriate. From this contact an attendance plan will be put in place and a date set to review attendance targets.

This may be done as part of an Early Help meeting if appropriate.

If concerns continue and attendance falls below 85%, school will make a referral to the Local Authority which will instigate Attendance Procedures.

Ultimately, the Local Authority has the power to prosecute parents for their child's unauthorised absence.

Rewarding good attendance

Weekly – Dudley the dragon is awarded to the class with the best attendance each Monday. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, he will provide a picture of himself to be displayed, rather than being physically present.

Classes are awarded the following amount of money, which they can spend on themselves at the end of a term.

£10 for 100% with no lates.

£5 for 100%

£1 for any class above 97%

£1 for each day with no lates

Termly – Individual children are rewarded as following:

Excellent attendance (100%) certificate and treat

Very good attendance (98% +) certificate

Improved attendance (within the term) certificate

Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

From September 2021 there is a new category of non-attendance; 'not attending in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category is only used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)³
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Examples are:

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only

Local lockdown – where some pupils need to be prevented from attending.

Remote education will be provided for pupils not attending due to circumstances related to coronavirus.

Code x should be used to record such absences.

Leave of absence during term time

Families are given regular holiday lists at the start of each school term. Families requesting leave of absence during term time must complete a leave of absence request form. Leave cannot be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances, which are considered on an individual basis.

Families receive written feedback on their request and a copy of the letter is kept in school, along with the request form, including a note of whether / not the leave can be authorised for exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised leave of absence is monitored every six weeks with referrals made to the Local Authority as appropriate.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Children who are missing from education because they have not returned after a school holiday or who have moved house and not been admitted to another school are referred within 5 days to the Local Authority.

Dual registered children

The attendance of children attending another school who are dual registered and remain on roll at Bowesfield is monitored as follows:

Daily – register check by school attended

If present – no further action

If absent – email to Bowesfield's Pastoral Support Adviser with details of action taken. Comment to be added to our register using SIMS. The host school will keep us updated on the absence daily, including informing us of the child's return to school.

Weekly – Host school to send registration certificate weekly. To be filed and kept in the office.

Children celebrating religious festivals

The number of absences authorised due to religious observance within an academic year is dependent on the dates of the festival. The majority of children in school are Muslim and the dates of Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr are adjusted annually.

If a religious festival falls on a school day, children may have 2 sessions authorised absence. If it falls at the weekend, they are expected in school all week and absences will be categorised as normal.

The maximum number of authorised absences per child is up to 4 within one academic year.

Parents / carers are asked to confirm whether or not their child will be attending school the day before it is likely to be Eid. This is recorded on a class sheet by the teacher at hometime. For Y6 children who walk home independently, the Pastoral Support Adviser will contact their parents by phone to confirm their plans.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher as follows:

- End of half term analysis of attendance of statutory school-aged children against the national average and previous year.
- End of half term analysis of attendance of the attendance of groups against the national average and previous year:

By Gender
 Pupil Premium / Not
 English as an additional Language (EAL) / Not
 Children in our Care (CioC) / Not
 SEN / No SEN
 Ethnicity

- End of half term analysis of attendance of non-statutory school-aged children against the national average and previous year.
- End of half term analysis of Persistent Absence against the national average and previous year
- End of half term analysis of Persistent Absence of groups as above.

Information will be shared with Governors in September, November, January, Feb / March, April, June.

This policy will be reviewed in July 2021.

Review Date	Changes made	Ratification Date by Governing Body
15 June 2018	Changes made to reflect change in job title from Parent Support Adviser to Pastoral Support Adviser. Changes made to weekly class rewards to reflect updated practice. Change made to name of Attendance Governor Changes made to include Dual registered children, celebration of religious festivals, monitoring arrangements.	19.6.18.
2.9.19.	Page 2 - changes made in line with LA Pupil Attendance and Absence Management Policy, July 2019: Referral to the LA if there are 10 unauthorised absences within the previous 8 school weeks (previously 6 weeks).	26.9.19.
8.9.20.	Page 3 – paragraph inserted re below 96% attendance monitoring. Page 4 – due to COVID-19 restrictions, attendance prizes will be awarded in classes rather than assemblies. Page 4 – Dudley picture rather than soft toy. Pages 4-5 section regarding ‘not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) inserted.	17.9.20.