



**Bowesfield  
Primary School**

## **Bowesfield Primary School**

### **Attendance Policy**

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| Last Review Date: 06.10.21                |
| Date approved by Governing Body: 29.11.23 |
| Review Date: November 2024                |

## 1. Introduction

The staff and Governors at Bowesfield Primary School, in partnership with parents/carers and pupils are committed to building a school which will serve the community and of which the community is proud.

At Bowesfield Primary School we firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end, we will do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the pupils in our care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and promptly resolved.

Bowesfield Primary School uses SIMS to log pupil attendance, monitoring where attendance dips below an acceptable level. Parents can expect to be questioned and challenged by our attendance team, if this occurs. We will set an annual attendance target for our school, which will usually be above national average.

## 2. Policy Aims

This policy aims to safeguard children by ensuring that they attend school regularly and when they do not attend, school is aware of the reason for absence. By law parents/carers are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school attend regularly.

Research demonstrates that regular attendance is important for several reasons:

- It leads to better academic progress
- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- It leads to greater confidence and security for our children, which leads to better social progress
- It gives greater continuity to the learning process
- It makes the transfer to secondary school easier
- Developing good habits of attendance and punctuality are key life skills.
- Pupils who miss school risk failing to achieve what they are capable of.
- Figures have shown that 90% of persistent, poor or non-attenders fail to achieve five or more good grades at GCSE and approximately one third achieve no GCSEs at all.

It is vital for parents and carers to remember that poor attendance means lost learning time:-

- 90% attendance =  $\frac{1}{2}$  day missed every week!
- Over one school year this is 4 weeks of learning lost!
- Over the 5 years at your secondary school you will have missed half a year!
- What impact might this have on your child's future ...?
- 17 missed schools days means that in secondary school a child is likely to drop a whole GCSE grade.

## Attendance and punctuality:

Where does your child sit on the attendance ladder?



### 3. 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 3 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.

#### 4. Tackling absence

*First day of absence:* If there has been no contact from home by 9.15a.m a member of school staff will ring families to confirm the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If there is no reply, a text home will be sent the same day requesting a phone call to school.

If no response is received, a home visit will be made the same day by the Family Support Advisor 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, a member of staff makes a follow up call to see how they are and when they will be well enough to return to school.

Every month, the Family Support Advisor will check any children whose attendance falls below 96% (national average 2020-21).

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.

Every month, the Family Support Advisor will 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.

#### 5. Tackling lateness

We recommend that children arrive at school at 8.40am. The school day starts at 8:50am. If you arrive after this time via the main entrance you will be given an L mark. All children arriving late are to wait with their parent/carer in the entrance and meet with a member of staff to establish the reason for being late. If you arrive after 9:30am you will be given a U mark on the register. The U means your child has been given an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Punctuality is monitored daily within class and monthly by the Family Support Advisor. Children who arrive on time every day will receive a reward.

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

## 6. 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.

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

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

A cause for concern 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.

## 7. 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 Family Support Advisor 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 for all children of statutory school age who will instigate Attendance Procedures.

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

## 8. Rewarding good attendance

The school recognises the achievement of good and excellent attendance. On a termly basis, congratulatory certificates for those children achieving 97-100% attendance will be sent home.

Additionally, termly attendance rewards are given out in class groups. This is done on a termly basis so that even if children have been absent in one term they have a chance to receive the reward in the following term.

## 9. 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 or 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.

#### 10. 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.

#### 11. 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 Family Support Advisor 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.

#### 12. 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 (R code). If it falls at the weekend, they are expected in school and absences will be categorised as unauthorised if they fail to attend (this is subject to Headteacher's discretion).

The maximum number of authorised absences per child is up to 4 within one academic year (One day authorised for each Eid celebration).

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, staff will contact their parents by phone to confirm their plans.

### 13. Monitoring

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
  - SEND / No SEND
  - 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 October, March and June.