

Bourn Church of England Primary Academy

Attendance Policy



Committee: HR & Comms

November 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1. We expect all pupils on roll to attend every day when the School is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so. We do all we can to encourage the pupils to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards School. To this end, we strive to make our School a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We will also make the best provision we can for those pupils who, due to exceptional circumstances, are prevented from coming to School.
- 1.2. The Government sees 95% attendance as the minimum expectation for all pupils and strives for all pupils to attend 100%. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and September 2013 make clear that Head Teachers may not authorise holidays (or other Leave of Absence) in term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. This policy is read in conjunction with the Home-School policy.

2. Arrival and registration

- 2.1. All children should arrive at School between 8.40 a.m. and 8.55 a.m. every day. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances.
- 2.2. Morning registration ends at 9.00am. If a pupil arrives after the registration period, h/she will be marked as late. The afternoon register is taken at 12.30pm in KS1 and at 12.55pm for pupils in Key Stage 2.
- 2.3. It is essential that pupils arriving and leaving School with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in and out from the office. The signing in/out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

3. Absences

- 3.1. Absences from School will be either Authorised or Unauthorised depending upon the circumstances.

3.2. Authorised Absences

Authorised absences are where a pupil has been absent and a satisfactory and legal reason has been communicated to the School via the Teacher or the School Office. Other reasons include: genuine illness, days of religious observance, unavoidable medical appointments, exceptional circumstances (bereavement/marriage of an immediate family member). The School expects authorised absences to be kept to a

minimum and, therefore, routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of School hours or during School holidays wherever possible. Where absence through illness has led to attendance of below 90%, parents/carers will be expected to provide evidence of illness and/or appointments.

3.3. Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are where the reason provided is not deemed acceptable by the School or where no letter or acceptable explanation is provided.

3.4. The School, using DfE guidelines, makes the final decision about whether or not any absence is seen as authorised or unauthorised.

3.5. The School strongly discourages any absence during term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. Bourn Primary follows the DfE guidelines, which took effect from September 2013, that state that requests for considering term time absence can only be considered when a formal request using the appropriate form is received 2 weeks prior to the child's absence. The School will not authorise any absence retrospectively and may follow up any reported absence that we feel may have been a term time holiday. Full details of the absence request procedure are outlined in the Home School policy and on the website.

4. Reporting and rewarding good attendance

4.1. Certificates for 100% attendance will be awarded to pupils for the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms as well as the whole academic year (when a book token is also awarded). A letter acknowledging improved attendance is sent to families which had been monitored with concerns.

5. Strategies used to support and improve attendance at school

5.1. Pupils must attend regularly (minimum of 95%) and punctually (before 8.55am).

5.2. Parents

Parents/carers (or whichever adult the pupil lives, or is staying, with) are legally responsible for the pupil's attendance at school and must ensure that pupils attend regularly, on time, in the correct uniform and with the correct equipment. They could be subject to criminal prosecution should their child's attendance fall below acceptable levels.

5.2.1. We expect parents to:

- telephone or email the School on, or before, the first day of their child's absence to notify staff of the absence, by 9.15 a.m.;
- complete a leave of absence request form, where applicable, which can be found on the website. When completed, the form should be sent to the School Office two weeks prior to the request. Parents must expect that all absence requests will be unauthorised unless they are informed otherwise;
- provide satisfactory medical evidence when required to do so;

- attend attendance planning meetings when required to do so with staff from School and the Education Welfare Officer when necessary.

5.3. **School**

The School will:

- roll call registration twice a day (a.m. and p.m.);
- contact the parent/carer by telephone or email on the first day of absence if no notification is received;
- monitor attendance when necessary;
- use the method, suggested by the Local Authority, of sending 3 formal letters to communicate with parents, highlighting absence and requesting explanations;
- investigate unexplained absences (if no satisfactory evidence is received within 10 days, the absence will remain recorded as unauthorised);
- hold attendance planning meetings to discuss how school can support parents/carers to improve attendance and to set targets (which may include referral to the School's family partnership co-ordinator);
- include attendance information on progress reports;
- refer to the Education Welfare Officer when attendance falls below 95%.

5.3.1. The Head Teacher will report attendance levels per class to the Full Governing Body.

5.3.2. The School Administrator will be responsible for monitoring attendance. If there is a long-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head Teacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

5.4. **Governors**

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will, therefore, examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that the School's attendance figures are as high as they should be. The School will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

5.5. **The Local Authority (LA)**

The Local Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) holds the statutory responsibility for school attendance for pupils in all Cambridgeshire schools. Education Welfare Officers (EWO) act on behalf of the LA to promote attendance and, in partnership with schools, enforce attendance through the use of legal sanctions when necessary. The EWO will:

- liaise with schools to help identify pupils whose attendance is unacceptable;
- write to parents requesting their attendance at planning meetings, parenting contract meetings and Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) meetings as appropriate;

- carry out assessments and broker supportive interventions from a range of external agencies such as the locality team (family work, youth support) when necessary;
- request the imposition of legal sanctions such as penalty notices, parent contracts, education attendance orders and fines.

The following information has been taken directly from the Cambridgeshire County Council website.

6. Term-time holidays

- 6.1. Pupils of school age who are registered at school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular attendance is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of educational opportunities which are available to him or her.
- 6.2. When a child is absent from school, he or she misses not only the teaching provided but is also less prepared for the lessons after his or her return.
- 6.3. There are only 190 statutory school days in one year and 175 days (weekends and school holidays) available to use for holidays. Therefore, every school day counts.

7. Key information

- 7.1. Prior to June 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed for Head Teachers to grant leave of absence for a term time holiday in 'special circumstances' and for extended leave in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.2. Amendments to these regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave. The amendments make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.