

Bicton C.E. Primary School and Nursery

Learning for a Lifetime



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Changes to procedures are in place during the COVID-19 pandemic

This policy was reviewed and updated by the Governing Body of Bicton C.E. Primary School and Nursery (delegated to the Standards and Curriculum Committee) in March 2021

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Johnson'.

Head teacher

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Freeman'.

Chair of Governing Body

At Bicton C.E. Primary School and Nursery we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer. For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of excellent attendance for all children.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents / guardians the importance of regular and punctual attendance. School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and the most recent guidance issued to schools from the Local Authority.

The Head teacher monitors attendance and punctuality continually and figures are shared and celebrated with pupils in weekly assemblies. Each year the School will examine attendance figures and set attendance / absence targets. These will reflect both national and Shropshire attendance targets. The School continually strives to improve attendance to ensure that it is achieving set goals.

The School's attendance target for 2019-2020 was 96.5% which cannot be reported on due to the school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our overall attendance from September 2019 to 06.03.20 was 96.2% and the Shropshire attendance average for the same period was 93.7%.

This policy sets out the procedures that the School will follow to meet its attendance targets.

Changes to the following arrangements are in place during COVID-19

School Procedures

Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day between 8.55am, when the bell is rung on the playground, and 9.00am. The afternoon registers are taken between 1:00pm and 1:05pm. The marking of registers will be in accordance with instructions set out at the front of the register.

The school day finishes at 3.15pm. Children should be collected promptly, unless they are attending an after school activity. In the unlikely event that a child is not collected at the end of the school day, and we are unable to make contact with parents / guardians or emergency contacts, social services will be contacted.

Lateness

Pupils arriving after 9.00am will be marked as late. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked with an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation e.g. school transport was delayed. In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Absence

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Head teacher or a member of staff acting on behalf of the Head teacher can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

On the first day of absence, parents and guardians must contact the School before 9:30am with information about their child's proposed absence. If the School does not receive an explanation for the absence, then the administrator or the Head teacher, will contact the parents / guardians directly

to determine the reason for absence. This information is recorded by the administrator and the child's class teacher is informed.

Continuing Absence

If absence continues and no contact with parents / guardians can be made, then the Head teacher or administrator will contact the Education Welfare Officer.

Frequent Absence

The administrator will bring to the attention of the Head teacher any emerging attendance concerns and this will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the School will try to resolve the problem with the parents / guardians first. If this is unsuccessful, the School will contact the Education Welfare Officer.

Returning to School

On returning from an absence, it is important that that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence Notes

Notes / letters received from parents and guardians explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Promoting attendance

The School will use opportunities, as they arise, to remind parents / guardians that it is their responsibility to ensure that pupils receive the education they are entitled to. A Home-School agreement can be used in this way.

Holidays in Term Time

Holidays during term time will not be authorised by the School and Local Authority, unless they are for exceptional circumstances. The annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The School will consider authorising an absence only if the circumstances are exceptional.

When parents / guardians request leave of absence for exceptional circumstances, a "Request for Pupil Leave of Absence Form" should be completed and returned to the School for authorisation as soon as possible. Applications will need to be made at least 6 weeks before the expected absence, and the reason for the request should be clearly stated. An appointment may, on request from the parent, be made to discuss the request face to face and the reasons behind it. The application will be considered by the Head teacher. The school aims to inform parents / guardians of their decision within five school days.

If the absence is not authorised, the EWO must receive a copy of the communication with parents / guardians at the same time. In such cases, a warning notice will be served. If a warning has been served and the holiday is taken, and the conditions are in line with the Code of Conduct, a Truancy Penalty Notice will be served. If the Truancy Penalty Notice is not paid, the Local Authority will prosecute for the absence under the Code of Conduct Regulations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents / guardians should:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed and equipped, and in a fit state to learn.
- Let the School know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered.
- Let the School know, by telephoning the school office before 9.30am, on the first day of absence from school, why their child is absent and when they expect them to return.
- Seek permission from School prior to any absence, including medical appointments.
- Not take their child on holiday during term-time.
- Not extend weekend breaks into the school week.
- Notify School if they intend to remove their child permanently from the School for any reason.

School will:

- Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily reception of children.
- Be consistent in their attendance practices.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Follow up any unexplained absences.
- Notify parents / guardians, at least annually, of their child's attendance level.
- Notify the Local Authority (LA) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are excluded.
- Notify the LA and / or the DFE of absence figures for the School and, where necessary, individual pupils.

The Head teacher will:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents / guardians.
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.
- Analyse attendance data.
- Oversee attendance procedures.
- Report to the Governors on attendance at least three times per year.

Governors will:

- With the Head teacher, monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly.