

# Bicton C.E. Primary School and Nursery

*Learning for a Lifetime*



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 September 2022

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed

Head teacher

Signed

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 most recent guidance issued by the Department for Education and the Local Authority.

*The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.*

*Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.*  
*DfE: Working together to improve attendance, September 2022*

The Head teacher – Mrs Natalie Johnson – continuously monitors attendance and punctuality data to identify any pupils or classes that may need support to improve their attendance / punctuality. Attendance for the whole school and individual classes, as well as lateness figures, are shared and celebrated with pupils in weekly assemblies; this aims to promote the importance of high attendance and good punctuality.

In conjunction with the School's linked Education Welfare Officer, attendance and absence targets are set for the academic year, which reflect both national and Shropshire attendance targets. The School continually strives to improve attendance to ensure that pupils are in school and ready to learn.

The Shropshire aspirational attendance target for 2021-2022 was 95%. Our overall attendance from September 2021 to 19.07.22 was 91.77% and the national average for primary schools for the same period was 92.8%.

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

### **School Procedures**

Morning registration takes place at the start of the school day at 9:00a.m and the afternoon registers are taken at 1:00p.m. Registers are marked in accordance with national attendance and absence codes.

The school day finishes at 3.15p.m. Children should be collected promptly, unless they are attending after-school clubs. 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, we will contact social services.

### **Lateness**

Pupils arriving after 9.00a.m, and who are not present at morning registration, are marked as 'late.' Pupils arriving after 9.30a.m 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**

On the first day of absence, parents and guardians must contact the school office on 01743 850212 or by email to [admin@bicton.shropshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@bicton.shropshire.sch.uk) before 9:30a.m to explain the reasons for their child's 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.

Parents should not message class teachers about a child's absence - either by email or on Class Dojo / Tapestry - as teachers may not see the message at the start of the school day.

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.

### **Continuing Absence**

If the absence continues and no contact with parents / guardians can be made, then the Head teacher or administrator will contact the Education Welfare Officer. A home visit may be carried out by the Head teacher and a second member of staff, where there are concerns about the child's whereabouts.

### **Frequent Absence**

The administrator informs the Head teacher of any emerging attendance concerns and this is discussed with the Education Welfare Officer.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the School tries to resolve the problem with the parents / guardians first. Supportive measures may include providing pastoral support to pupils or signposting parents to different organisations to overcome any barriers they may be facing outside school e.g. sleep patterns. If this is unsuccessful in improving attendance / punctuality or parents do not engage, the School contacts the Education Welfare Officer and they may intervene.

### **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 given to other pupils.

### **Absence Notes**

Notes / letters / emails 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 information may need to be retained for a longer period.

### **Promoting good attendance**

The School uses opportunities, as they arise, to remind parents / guardians that it is their responsibility to ensure that pupils receive the education they are entitled to. Expectations of attendance and punctuality are outlined in our Home-School agreement, which parents are asked to agree to and sign when their child joins the School.

Parents are routinely reminded not to book routine medical or dental appointments during the school day and, where possible, to make appointments during school holidays or after the end of the school day. Medical / dental appointment cards may be requested where frequent absences start to occur.

### **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 is not considered to be 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 need to be made at least 6 weeks before the expected absence, and the reason for the request should be clearly stated. Parents may request a face-to-face meeting to discuss the absence request and the reasons behind it. The application will be considered by the Head teacher and 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 9.30a.m on the first day of absence, 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, regularly review and discuss attendance data, including emerging trends. This will include examining recent and historic trends at a school level and benchmarking against local authority and national data.