



Attendance Policy

Version History

Version No.	Date	Author	Comments
1.0			Policy Created
1.1	Dec 21	L White	Policy reviewed
1.2	Jan 22	L White	Policy updated in accordance with DfE update on Addendum to recording attendance during the 2021 to 2022 academic year. 'As defined by the Government' added to the sentence 'if your child has a critical key worker place. New Category for non-attendance related to coronavirus section removed per addendum. Date specific term removed from Data Collection section and summary. Names amended in summary.
1.3	Apr 22	L White	Section on 'Absence for Performance' re-introduced to policy.
1.4	Oct 22	L White	Coronavirus section on attendance sub-codes, definitions and scenarios removed.
1.5	Jan 24	F Troop	Minor change made to staff name
1.6	May 24	S McNair	Policy updated with criteria in line with West Northamptonshire Council requirements for legal action (fixed penalty notice/court). Updated to include details about process referrals for irregular attendance and term time absences (holidays).

Introduction

At Bridgewater Primary School, we want all of our children to thrive. In order to be successful, and for the children to access the quality education that they are entitled to, regular attendance is essential. Parents and school staff are responsible for promoting regular attendance. Pupils must attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Regular attendance will help the children to fulfil their potential and build secure friendships. Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school as well as on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority

Aim

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance for all.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility to attend school.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education
- Ensure that our policy applies to children starting in the EYFS in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the outside agencies, where appropriate, so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school consistently on time.

All pupils are expected to achieve an attendance target of **above 96%** and to aim for 100%. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning; this impacts upon their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child ending the year at 90% attendance means that the child misses on average:

- One half day every week
- Nearly four weeks every school year
- Over one school year in a school career

Below 90% is defined as 'persistent' absence.

Missing 50% of sessions is defined as 'severe absence.'

Through this policy Bridgewater Primary School aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. We will aim to achieve this by:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils and families who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Approach

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data, including analysis of different pupil groups.
- Clearly communicate the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- Have consistent records which show percentages of authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.

- Work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Refer to the School Attendance Service (SASS) any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- Monitor school attendance against local and national trends.
- Report attendance statistics to West Northamptonshire LA and the DfE where requested.
- Make staff aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Office Manager and Parent Link Worker in the first instance, who will keep the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team informed.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school, with the Senior Leadership Team.
- Overall monitoring and analysis of school attendance.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Noting and acting on any emerging trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Authorising referrals to the SASS service.
- Reporting to the Governing Body regarding attendance and actions to address any trends.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

Governors

The governing body has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's attendance policy and practice by:

- Supporting the Headteacher and members of staff to uphold the Attendance Policy.
- Encouraging all parents and carers with their responsibility to ensure attendance and punctuality is at its optimum for learning.
- Engaging with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team on analysing attendance figures, including challenging the school on any emerging trends and noting any actions the school is putting in place to address them.
- Reviewing the reports made regularly to the Governing Body regarding attendance figures.
- Assigning a governor to be responsible for supporting attendance and best practice at the school. The assigned governor is Gary Palmer.

The School Office Manager and Parent Link Worker

The Parent Link Worker and the Office Manager support families to overcome barriers, which is impacting upon attendance and offer support as needed, including but not limited to:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence, including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention/ reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Providing reports and background information.
- Making referrals to the SASS service.

Administration and Office staff

Members of staff in the School Office, particularly the School Office Manager and School Receptionist, are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence and lateness.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Headteacher, a member of the Senior Leadership team and the School Office Manager where there are concerns, so they can be acted upon
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Putting attendance percentage information onto reports and sharing any concerns during Parents' Evenings/Termly Learning Conferences in order to keep parents regularly updated about their child's attendance.

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.

- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we require evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter.)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary and in exceptional circumstances, as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Daily Procedures

Computerised registers provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents that may be required in a court of law; for example, as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school.

All pupils are expected to arrive at school and be in class between 8.45 am to 9.00 am each morning ready for registration and the start of the school day.

The register is completed promptly in the morning at 9.00 am and in the afternoon at 1.15 pm. Children arriving at school after 9am or after 1.15 pm for the afternoon session must report to the School Office.

For monitoring purposes, we are required to record this, including the reason for the lateness and a late mark will be placed on the register.

Any children arriving at school after the registers have been closed (9.30 am and 1.45 pm) will receive a 'U' (unauthorised absence) code on their attendance. Codes for attendance are shown in Appendix 2.

Pupils missing registration and arriving late for school following a medical or dental appointment will be coded as 'M' on the register. Parents should, however, avoid making routine medical/dental appointments during school hours whenever possible.

Unplanned absences:

Parents should inform the school of any pupil absence by calling the school and leaving a message on the absence line by 8.45 am for each day the child is not in school.

Once the registers have been taken and any absence notifications updated, a Parent Mail email will be sent to all parents of pupils who are not in school requesting a reason

for non-attendance. The School Office will continue to contact the parent until a reason for the absence has been received.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Planned absences:

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done by completing an appointment form, which is obtained from the school office. However, **we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.**

We may ask for medical evidence of an appointment, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence, having this enables absence to be authorised and for the school to work with a family where there is a longer-term medical condition or barrier to attendance.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

REPORTING ATTENDANCE TO PARENTS

Monitoring and Reporting

The school regularly monitors attendance and late arrivals with letters to parents advising them of the school's concerns. Where persistent lateness/absence gives cause for concern these will be referred to the School Attendance Support Officer (SASO) and a Parenting Contract meeting arranged.

A Parenting Contract is an agreement between a parent/carer and either the school or the local education authority. This contract is a way for the parent and the school to work together to improve the pupil's attendance or lateness in school.

Attendance definitions are set up to help everyone to understand when attendance becomes a cause for concern.

These zones are:

Expected attendance is above 96%.

Cause for concern and monitoring: Attendance is between 92% and 95.9%. Attendance will be monitored closely and reviewed regularly to check it is improving. We aim to work in partnership with parents to support any barriers to increasing attendance.

If there is no improvement it becomes a cause for concern and action.

Cause for concern and action: Attendance is below 92%. **Persistent absence** is classed as below 90% but any absence close to this is monitored and a letter may be sent to parents/carers regarding this. A parenting contract may be put in place. In cases of unexplained persistent absence, we will seek advice from the SASO (School Attendance Support Officer).

Severe absence is defined by the DfE as being 50% of sessions missed.

Definitions

Authorised absence is an absence that is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. **Authorised absence will still be reflected in your child's percentage attendance.**

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Please be aware that for absences of 3 days or more of illness, or absence at the end of the term when a child will not be back in school until the new term, the school may undertake a welfare home visit. The decision to make a home visit will be on a case-by-case basis.

Unauthorised absence is when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. An absence will be unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off-site, dual registered or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes educational visits or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of the appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Requesting Absence from School

It is the expectation of the Department for Education that **headteachers do not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time** unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Exceptional circumstances may be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion and may include bereavement, marriage, religious observance, education off-site or representing school, county or country.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Holidays in Term Times

Holidays during term time will **NOT** be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. When a child is absent for a long period their learning can be disrupted and, on their return from holiday, they will find that the class has moved onto other units of work; this can impact on their future attainment, sense of confidence and wellbeing within the class.

Fixed Penalty Notices for Term Time Absence

In line with West Northamptonshire County Council policy, parents/carers may be fined if they take a child out of school for the purpose of a holiday. West Northamptonshire County Council has updated its policy on unauthorised absences. The period for parents receiving a fixed term penalty notice **is for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) over a period of six weeks**. The school will deem this as

irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include,

A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine without further reference to you for a penalty notice this warning is valid for 12 months.

Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.

Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment."

If a holiday or absence during term time is unavoidable parents are asked to:

- Complete a Leave of Absence form which can be obtained from the School Office
- Email or write to the Headteacher on head@bridgewater-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk stating the circumstances of the holiday request.

The School Attendance Support Service (SASS) previously known as the Education and Inclusion Partnership Team (EIPT) supports the right of all children to receive a high-quality education. The service will work to overcome any barriers to learning through skilled problem-solving with a range of partners.

Absence for Performance

Children wishing to be removed from school for a performance must have a local authority licence. The Head Teacher will consider all requests that are made with a licence, but she must be satisfied that this absence is not having a negative effect on a child's education before signing to authorise this absence.

The school will authorise **up to 3 days absence per academic year** for performances. Any further absences are at the Head Teacher's discretion; they will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may not be authorised.

Where permission is sought for repeated absences or a long-term absence, the impact on the child's longer-term education will be considered before agreeing. Their current attendance data will also be reviewed.

Wherever possible, we urge parents to consider performance roles that occur outside of the school hours, at weekends or in the holidays.

Data Collection

The DfE will collect attendance data for the school census, which will include data from the Autumn term.

Summary

Bridgewater Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Any parents/carers experiencing difficulty with the regular attendance or punctuality of their child/children are encouraged to contact the School Office in the first instance so help can be appropriately organised.

The members of Bridgewater Primary supporting children and parents/carers with attendance and punctuality are:

- Mrs Alison Harvey – Headteacher
- Mrs Julie Breakwell– School Officer Manager
- Mrs Frances Troop – Deputy Headteacher/DSL
- Mrs Sophie McNair – Assistant Headteacher/Pupil Premium Lead
- Mrs Nicola Redden – SENDCo

Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Governing Body

Signed

Date

Headteacher

Appendices

Appendix 1:

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

Appendix 2: Attendance codes:

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 3:

Additional Guidance and Information:

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Pupil attendance in schools – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](http://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

[Pupil attendance and absence in schools in England \(shinyapps.io\)](http://shinyapps.io)

[Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)