



Attendance Policy

The Headteacher, staff and governors at Bridgewater Primary School regard regular attendance as essential for the development of a quality education and everyone is responsible for promoting regular attendance among the pupils. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. 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 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.

We aim to work in partnership with parents to support good attendance and share the link to pupil attainment. The Education Act 2011 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

All pupils are expected to achieve an attendance target of above 95% 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 which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

School Aims and Objectives of the Policy

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, except in exceptional medical circumstances.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the 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.
- 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.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

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 do this by:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of 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 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.

Procedures

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

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Service (EIP) any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Northamptonshire LA and the DfE where requested.

- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

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 by 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 between 9.00 am to 9.30 am or after 1.15 pm for the afternoon session must report to the School Office. To monitor this, 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.

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.

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 ParentMail text 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.

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 Education Entitlement Service 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.

Any pupils going out of school during the school day will be signed out by a staff member or the School Office. Children are to be collected from Reception and if they return the same day must be booked back into school by the School Office.

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 may find that the class has moved on; 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 Northamptonshire County Council policy, parents/carers may be fined if they take a child out of school for the purpose of a holiday. From 22 April 2016 Northamptonshire County Council has updated its policy on unauthorised absences. The time frame for parents receiving a fixed term penalty notice has **reduced from ten to five days or 10 sessions**. As a result all holiday or absence requests of 5 days or more will automatically be referred to the Educational and Inclusion Partnership team (EIP) and may result in a fine.

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.

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 the Headteacher on head@bridgewater-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk stating the circumstances of the holiday request

All holiday or absence requests for 5 days or more will automatically be referred to the Educational and Inclusion Partnership team (EIP).

Pupils found in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed-term or permanent exclusion

If a child is subject to a fixed-term or permanent exclusion it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their children are not in a public place during the first five days of their exclusion, during school hours of a school day, including lunch and break times, without reasonable justification. Following this time a child would either return to school or be offered alternative provision by the school. There may be reasonable justification for a parent/carer to have not ensured the pupil is not in a public place and the circumstances of each case will be considered.

In the instance where a child or young person is found in public place during fixed-term or permanent exclusion, a Penalty Notice can be issued even though the absences during the exclusion may be regarded as authorised.

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.

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.

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 such as 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.

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.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Noting and acting on any emerging trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence, including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the EWO service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Reporting to the Governing Body regarding attendance and actions to address any trends.

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 other 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 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.
- Reports on attendance will be made regularly to the Governing Body regarding attendance figures.

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 or a member of the Senior Leadership team in her absence 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.

Administration staff

Members of staff in the School Office, particularly the School Office Manager, 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.
- 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.
- Sending out standard letters regarding 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 do 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.

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.

In 2016-17 the members of Bridgewater Primary supporting children and parents/carers with attendance and punctuality are:

- Mrs Alison Harvey – Headteacher
- Mrs Janice Cox – School Officer Manager
- Mrs Frances Troop – Deputy Headteacher
- Ms Sharon Jones – Pastoral Care

Related Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Policy

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of the Governing Body

Signed

Date

Headteacher