



**Biddick Hall Junior School**

**Attendance Policy 2020**

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## 1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. We have a school target of 97%.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. School procedures**

#### **3.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

#### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents can ring school or leave a message via the school or through parent mail.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

#### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

#### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

#### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents

A letter is sent out each half term informing parents of their child's attendance. Meetings are held with parents where attendance is a concern.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Holidays will not be granted during term under any circumstance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account 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 – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

### 4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

*At Biddick Hall Junior school we use lots of initiatives to promote good attendance.*

- Every Friday afternoon staff are given a print out of children who have had 100% attendance that week and each child will get a 100% sticker and a stamp on their individual attendance card.
- On a Monday morning in assembly all children who have had 100% attendance will go into a draw and one child per class will be selected to win a 100% pencil; a 100% bookmark; a 100% ruler or they can choose to go in first for lunch each day that week.
- All 100% names will go into a year group draw each half term. One child will be chosen to win a £5 Asda voucher.
- Each term their parents will win a £25 Asda voucher also.

- Each term any child who has had 100% attendance for the whole term will get a certificate and a wristband; bronze for one term, silver for two terms and gold for a whole year.
- Each term any child who has had 97% or above attendance will be given a treat - this term will be a film and treats in the hall.
- Each Monday the class with the best attendance will get a certificate and 15 mins extra play or 15 mins on I-pads if weather is poor, at a time that is suitable that week.
- Each half term the class with the most weekly attendance awards will be given a treat – an afternoon of an activity of their choice.
- Attendance is mentioned in weekly bulletins and is on the school website.

The school works with parents to support regular attendance – for example, communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, indicating a named contact in school, etc.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

The head teacher monitors pupil absence on a daily and weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Then call each day the child is absent.

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The head teacher tracks the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Allan Ball is the governor responsible for behavior and attendance.

### **7.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### **7.4 Class teachers.**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes.

## 7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually and will be shared with the governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

## 10. Addendum in relation to COVID -19

It is our plan that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term.

Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school sooner rather than later.

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak (set out on page 9 of the [attendance guidance](#)), in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X<sup>4</sup>
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

### **Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)**

- View [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#).
- Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.
- If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.
- If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
- If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.
- If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.

- In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

## **Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)**

View [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and [NHS test and trace](#) guidance.

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The [NHS test and trace](#) guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

## **Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine**

View guidance on [how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK](#).

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine<sup>5</sup>. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

## **Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only**

View [guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from Covid-19](#).

Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.

If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high. Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with the school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.

Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. Code X should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.

## **Local lockdown**

If rates of the disease rise locally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

## **Remote education**

If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

## Appendix 1: 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
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
X	Covid-19	Pupils is not attending a session and meets the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X <sup>4</sup>

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
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

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day