



Bishopstone C.E. Primary School

Bishopstone Church of England School, Bishopstone, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 8PW

Attendance Policy – September 2016

Introduction

This policy has been designed to ensure that the Governing Body, the staff, the children and parents of Bishopstone Primary School promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality. Priority is placed on attendance and the legal requirements for recording are met.

As a school we believe that it is important that children attend school regularly if they are to benefit from the learning opportunities provided. Children only get one chance in school and if they do not attend they may not be able to keep up with school work. They may also miss out on the social aspects of school life. There is also a detrimental effect on the other children in the class when the teacher has to take time to help the pupil who has been absent to catch up with their learning.

- We expect all of our children to attend school regularly, entering the premises punctually. Our school day runs from 09:00 until 3.15pm.
- Term dates can be found on our school website.
- Any children on site prior to 09:00 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
- We would like children to be on site no earlier than ten minutes before the start of the school day, so no earlier than 08:50
- We expect children to be collected by a parent or a delegated adult at 3.15pm or after the end of club activities if this applies.

Aims

- To maximise attendance of all children thus supporting high levels of attainment and achievement.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those at the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely with and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Service, Parent Support Advisor and multi-agency teams.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Governors

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

Headteacher

- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with outside agencies when attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.
- To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- To provide Governors with information to enable them to agree annual attendance targets.
- To communicate with parents/carers regarding significant concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.



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Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- To record the reasons for absence given to them on the register using the appropriate code.
- To communicate with parents regarding their child's absences.
- To raise any concerns about a child's absence with administrative staff or the head teacher.
- To respond promptly to any query raised following analysis of registers by administrative staff.
- To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

Administrative staff

- To input attendance data using the Attendance Manager System.
- To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports for the head teacher and Education Welfare Officer as appropriate.
- To contact any parent/carer who has not informed the school as to why their child is absent on the first day of absence.
- To contact the parent/carer if the child has not returned to school after three days.
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
- To make a judgement, in conjunction with the head teacher, whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Parents /Carers

- Have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- Should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration (9:00am).
- Should notify the school as soon as possible on the first morning of absence, if their child is to be absent for any unavoidable reason such as sickness. This may be done by phone Tel: 01793790521, by letter or in person or email: admin@bishopstone.swindon.sch.uk.
- Should avoid booking family holidays during term-time. The school will not agree to a family holiday during term time. All absence requests are at the discretion of the head teacher and can only be authorised by the headteacher.

Parent Support Advisor

- Following a referral from the school, to work with families to improve pupils' attendance rates.

Education Welfare Officer

- Following a referral from the school, to work with families to improve pupils' attendance rates.
- To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.
- To enforce the law regarding school attendance.

Medical personnel

Specialist staff and the school nurse may be involved in ensuring the best possible attendance by a child with a severe medical condition. A 'Care Plan' is likely to be needed and on-going communication between the family, school and appropriate medical personnel is essential.

Administration

The School uses the ICT based Attendance Manager to store and monitor data in relationship to attendance. Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance



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register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are returned to the School Office at 9:00am/13:00 after the closure of the registration periods. Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

1. Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are those that cannot unavoidably be taken in school time. They include:

- the child being sick
- a family bereavement

Any other reasons should be discussed with the school as soon as possible.

Unacceptable reasons include shopping, birthdays and holidays.

If parents do have to take their child out of school in term time:

- time off must be requested as soon as possible
- time off should never be asked for during test periods

Teachers are asked to keep a file of authorised absence notes within the register, which will be dated and initialled when the teacher receives them. At the end of the academic year absence notes are kept on file, together with the old registers.

2. Illness

Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence by 09:00 (by telephone or email) to provide the reason for the absence and where possible on each subsequent day of absence.

- This must be followed by a written note/email on the child's return to school.
- If no note or telephone call is received the school will contact the parent(s) directly.
- If a teacher is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher **MUST** be informed.

3. Medical or Dental Appointments

- Whenever possible, parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments outside of school hours.
- If a child has to leave school during the day for a medical appointment or other authorised reason the teacher should be informed in writing as soon as possible (written letter or email).
- Children **MUST** be collected by an authorised adult.
- Children will **NEVER** be allowed to leave the premises during school time on their own.
- When a child is collected the adult should inform the office or teacher that they are taking the child.

4. Punctuality/lateness

We lay a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day, but it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching. Registers are taken twice daily, at 09:00 and 13:00.

- All children who arrive in school after 09:10 registration will be marked late.
- Any child who arrives after 09:30 in the morning will be marked absent for that session unless an exceptional or unavoidable reason is provided.



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5. Unauthorised Absences

Parents **do not** have the legal right to take children out of school for holidays. Taking a holiday during term time, whether it is at the beginning, middle or end of a term, means that children miss important educational activities that can result in them falling behind their group. Children cannot make this time up by the school providing 'work' to complete during the holiday as they miss out on quality teaching time. Holidays should not be booked in school time and will not be authorised by the school.

Current legislation from September 1st 2013 states that:

Current Headteachers may not grant any leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances

The correct 'request for authorised absence' form must be completed and handed into the school office PRIOR to the requested leave dates.

Regulations state that if the school is not informed by parents of visits to the doctor, dentist, illness etc, these absences automatically become unauthorised. It is therefore essential that any reasons for absence (even short absences) be given in writing.

Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this, on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason, the school will record such absences as unauthorised. In some cases, this may be retrospective and authorisation may be withdrawn should circumstances arise leading the school to decide that the reason given was not truthful. If this occurs, this will be discussed with the parent.

6. Non-attendance

By law the school will report non-attendance to Swindon Local Education Authority. The Education Welfare Office may visit or write to the parents of any child not attending school regularly, or who is repeatedly late for school.

Parents are committing an offence if they fail to make sure their child attends school regularly. The LEA can decide to issue a penalty notice or to prosecute the family. If you take your child out of school without the Head Teacher's permission, you may be issued with a penalty notice.

The Department for Education announced that the threshold for Persistent Absence will reduce from 15% to 10% from September 2015. From September 2015 this equals 19 days over the year.

SBC considers attendance between 90-95% to be irregular attendance. Below 90% would be considered persistent absence. Absence includes all absences, authorised and unauthorised. Attendance rates are calculated over a twelve school week period from receipt of the Penalty Notice request. (September 2016)

7. Responsibility

In order for this policy to be successful every member of the school community must make attendance a high priority. We must share our enthusiasm for education and communicate its importance to all members of the school community.



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*the term parent(s) also extends to guardian/legal representative

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Policy approved by Emma Lindsay

Designation Headteacher

Signed- *ELindsay*

Date September 2016

Review September 2017