



Bibury C of E Primary School Attendance Policy

Vision - A safe learning community that nurtures and inspires individuality, confidence and success.

This school aims to be part of the wider community through fostering Christian values, and the development of spirituality through reflection, to enhance relationships.

Bibury C of E Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy has been written with guidance from the following documents:

The DFE's Advice on School Attendance, October 2014.

The DFE Statutory guidance for School attendance parental responsibility measures, Jan 2015

Local authority guidance on Children Missing Education and missing Children, October 2015

Local authority guidance on Managing School Absence, November 2015

Why is Good Attendance Important?

All pupils of compulsory school age are, by law, entitled to a full-time education and attendance has a major impact on a child's future life opportunities. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that it is understood how important good attendance is in enabling children to achieve their best and the procedures put in place to support this.



We aim to:

Achieve school attendance data in line with or above national data.

Create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is accepted as the norm.

Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.

Monitor and reduce authorised and unauthorised absence.

Monitor and improve punctuality.

Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance and punctuality between home and school.

Work with families to improve attendance and punctuality of those pupils with high levels of absence and lateness.

Improve parents' awareness of the school's policy regarding requests for leave of absence for their child during term time, and the impact the request has on children's progress.

What the law says about School Attendance:

Full-time education is compulsory for all children aged between 5 and 18, either at school or otherwise, with a child beginning primary education during the school year he or she turns 5. Children are required to attend school for 190 days (380 sessions) in any single academic year (September-July).

Absence from school is a legal matter. By law, all children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at a school must attend full-time and be punctual. Only schools can authorise pupil absence from school, if they are satisfied with the reason provided by the parent, in writing. The role of the local education department is to encourage and enforce the law on school attendance. Ultimately, the local authority can instigate legal action.

In this document the advice refers to:

The Education Act 1996;

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended;

The Education Act 2002;

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;

The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011;

Crime and Disorder Act 1998;

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;

The Education Act 2005;

The Education and Inspections Act 2006;

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;

Magistrates' Courts (Parenting Orders) (Amendment) Rules 2007;

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended;

The Education and Skills Act 2008.



Registration Procedures

The school day starts at 8:50am for KS2 children and at 9:00am for Infants. We expect them to arrive in good time to start the day; therefore staff are available from 8.00am to take responsibility for the children as they arrive. Registers open at 9am and close at 9.05am. Children arriving between 9.05am and 9.10am will be marked as late. Any child arriving after registers close at 9.10am, without a valid reason, will be marked as unauthorised for the morning session this will affect the child's attendance figure.

If children arrive late they need to be signed in by their parent/guardian, at the school office, so we know they are on site and we are able to check their dinner arrangements. If attendance, including lateness, is a problem we will notify and work with the parents in the first instance. It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child may arrive late because of transport difficulties etc. In these instances school should be informed as soon as possible. The registers are taken again at 1.00pm.

Absence Procedures

If a child is unfit for school; parents should contact the school by 9.00am on the first day, in person, by email or by telephone and repeat this each consecutive day until they return. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. It is school procedure to contact parents of children who are absent that have not notified school by 9.15am. This procedure ensures good safeguarding practice and ensures all children are accounted for.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised Absence

An absence 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 guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes:

- ☒ Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- ☒ Absences which have not been properly explained.
- ☒ Children who arrive at school after registration closes.
- ☒ Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- ☒ Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been approved.

The school need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence, whether written, telephoned or given in person, if they doubt the explanation. It is for the school to judge whether the explanation given is a satisfactory justification for the absence. Any further



investigation needs to be handled sensitively but if, after this, questions remain (or where no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming), the absence must be treated as unauthorised. Where possible, parents will be informed when an absence is unauthorised. The children's attendance data is reported to parents in the children's end of year school report.

Time off School during Term Time

School Attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, October 2014, page 16, says:

'Can a parent take their child on holiday during term time?'

Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.'

What does the Department for Education say?

Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and came into force on 1 September 2013.

*Amendments to the Education Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless **exceptional** circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted*

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education. However, from discussion with the DfE and professional associations it is suggested that exceptional leave would be:

- Rare
- Significant
- Unavoidable
- Short (NAHT, 2014)

There is an expectation that parents should not take pupils out of school during term time. Schools are required to ensure that children only miss school if it is absolutely unavoidable, because of the detrimental effect that this has on pupils' attainment and therefore their future life chances.

For all absence during term time, a formal written request must be made from a person with parental responsibility at **least two weeks** before the planned absence. Each request will be considered individually taking account of factors, such as:



Personal circumstances for the request

Age of pupil

Overall attendance of pupil

The time of year for the proposed absence and whether it impacts on specific curricular issues e.g. tests

The child's stage of education and their progress

An assessment of the impact that missing out on learning will have on the individual child

The LA recommends that time off taken for the following reasons are not exceptional and should not be authorised:

availability of cheap holidays

availability of desired accommodation

overlap with beginning or end of a term.

There is no automatic right to any time off school for a holiday.

Absence from school which has not been approved by the school in writing is unauthorised absence and as such may result in a penalty notice or prosecution for non-attendance – see below.

If a child is withdrawn during term time, disruption to the learning process happens. There is sometimes a belief that this can be made up by the school providing 'work' for the child to complete during the absence. However, this cannot replace the quality teaching time and experiences the child has missed. It is not our policy to provide work for such absences and it will be impossible for your child to revisit these experiences when they return.

Persistent Absence

The Department for Education defines a persistent absentee as a pupil who misses more than 10% of sessions in an academic year. Attendance below 90% is labelled as "**a Persistent Absentee**".

As a matter of school policy, each term parents will be contacted if a child's attendance falls below 90%. It is the head teacher's legal responsibility to decide whether he/she agrees or disagrees with the reason for an absence. If, in his/her opinion, the reason for the absence is not acceptable, he/she will mark the absences as "unauthorised". Significant unauthorised absences may lead to further action including a formal warning, involvement from the local authority and a fine.



Penalty notice or prosecution for non-attendance

Penalty Notice

The Education Regulations 2013 set out the procedures for issuing notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure the child's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. £60 fines should be paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.

A Penalty Notice can only be issued when an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason or in one of the following circumstances of unauthorised absence:

Holiday during term time when the school has not authorised the absence and the child has missed at least 10 sessions within a 10 week period.

Persistent late arrival at school after the registers have closed, and where the U code is used on the attendance certificate on at least 10 occasions within a 10 week period.

Excluded Pupil found in a public place within the first 5 days of any exclusion.

The exclusion letter issued to parents is a warning of this, and if a child is found in a public place within the first five days of an exclusion, schools may request the issue of a Penalty Notice.

In all but exceptional circumstance, the school will issue a formal warning letter to parents giving 15 school days for improvement to be made, before requesting a penalty notice. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice, so these 15 days allows parents time to make representations to the school.

Prosecution

The Local Authority may decide to prosecute a parent.

Each parent could be:

Fined up to £1,000

Given a Community Order

Made subject to a Parenting Order Ordered to pay costs to the Council

For repeated offences, higher level prosecution under the s444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996 may occur and parents could be subject to:

A fine up to £2,500

Up to three months imprisonment

A Community Order

A Parenting Order

An order to pay costs to the Council



Children Missing Education

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is **not** registered at any formally approved education activity eg school, alternative provision, elective home education, **and** has been out of education provision for at least 4 weeks'.

CME also includes those children who are **missing** (family whereabouts unknown), and are usually children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address **and either:**

has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or

has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or

left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

Refer to the Department for Education, Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, January 2015, for further information.

The school follows the Local Authority's procedures for children missing education and Missing Children Protocol, Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board

School Closures

The academic year is 190 days. Schools also have to have an additional 5 days that they can use for staff training; often called INSET (In Service Training) Days. These days are not part of the 190 days which is every child's entitlement.

The head teacher will make every effort to ensure that the school remains open for 190 days.

However, in some circumstances, the school may have to close. The head teacher must always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person who uses the school site and this includes: pupils, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors. If at any point, to use the school building would be detrimental to a person or persons' health, safety and welfare, then the Head teacher must close part or all of the school. Such events may be:

Not enough staff to safely supervise the pupils and ensure the safe running of the school

Lack of fresh running water and/or toilet facilities

Lack of appropriate lighting and/or heating

Damage to the structure of the building e.g. fire, water or weather damage.

Instruction to close due to a local emergency incident

Emergency at the school (See Emergency Plan)

Severe weather - In the event that severe weather is forecast, or is developing, the head teacher, will consider either closing the school in advance of the school day, closing the school early, or opening the school later than usual. The action taken will always result from consideration of pupils, parents and staff facing 'significant risk of serious injury' in school or whilst travelling to or from school.

Once a decision is made, the Head teacher will endeavour to inform parents of that decision and the details of any arrangements that have been put in place. 9 February 2016



Parents should always assume that the school will remain open during term time unless they hear otherwise.

If the head teacher decides to close the school, then the register is closed for the day and coded as an enforced school closure. This does not affect a child's attendance record.

Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality

Discussing attendance at parent/teacher consultation meetings.

Individual attendance and punctuality information detailed in end of year report.

Reporting progress about attendance and reiterating expectations in head teacher's start of term letters.

By publishing and displaying attendance statistics in the school newsletter.

By celebrating good and improved attendance.

Attendance and punctuality posters.

Monitoring Attendance

The school has a duty to monitor the attendance of all children.

Every term the head teacher will look at the attendance of all children in the school and report this to Governors.

If we are concerned about attendance we will talk with the family. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance we will seek advice from the local authority.

We speak to the local authority about all pupils that are under 90% attendance and agree an action plan of support.

Supplementary to the register checks, we analyse attendance data to identify and challenge persistent absence.

We analyse registration data termly to identify any other factors that may be preventing the achievement of good attendance across the whole school.

We regularly review our Attendance Policy and procedures.

Summary

Bibury CofE Primary School therefore request that:

Pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils arrive on time – arrive by 8.50am for the morning session with registration at 9am every day and 1.00pm to begin the afternoon session.

Parents/carers ensure their child arrives in school prepared for the school day.

Parents/carers inform a member of staff or the school office by 9.00am if their child is unable to attend school or gives a reason that the child may be late.

Parents/carers contact the school by 9.00am on the first day of the child's absence and repeat this each consecutive day until they return.

Parents/carers encourage a positive attitude towards school and their child by showing an interest in the life of the school.

Parents/carers make every effort not to arrange dental or similar appointments during school hours.



Parents/carers avoid taking their child on holidays during term-time.

Parents/carers notify the school immediately of any change of address or contact details, especially mobile phones.

Parents/carers notify the school of any family circumstances that might have an adverse effect on the child.

School staff complete registers accurately and punctually morning and afternoon.

School staff follow up any unexplained non-attendance.

School staff record accurately all absences in the register.

School staff inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance of concerns.

Agreed February 2016 for annual review.



Lateness Letter 1

Date

Dear

RE: Lateness

During a recent register check, I noticed that your child is frequently late for school, please see enclosed report.

I will therefore, be monitoring your child's punctuality over the next 15 school days. If there is no improvement during this time I will be requesting a meeting with you to discuss the matter further.

I appreciate that there are some situations where lateness may be unavoidable. However, when your child is late he/she misses important instructions at the beginning of the session. Not only is their education disadvantaged by this, but other pupils are affected by the disruption a pupil arriving late causes.

I look forward to noting an improvement in your child's punctuality over the course of the next two weeks.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Head teacher



Lateness Letter 2

Date:

Dear

RE: Lateness

Further to my previous letter on <insert date of Letter 1> there has been little or no improvement in your child's punctuality. Please find enclosed your child's attendance record. I would be grateful if you could arrange an appointment to discuss your child's punctuality with me when we should be able to identify and plan ways together of making improvements to your child's punctuality at school.

I look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher



Attendance Letter 1

Dear <Parents Name>

RE: Attendance of < Pupil's Name>

From our regular monitoring of the attendance registers I notice that your child's attendance is reported as ----%. Please find attached a copy of your child's current attendance record. As I am sure you are aware, it is important that < pupil's name > maintains regular school attendance, as any absence may interrupt his/her academic progress and may have an additional impact on maintaining friendships. Regular attendance is a legal requirement.

If you require any advice or support to ensure that your child attends school regularly then please do not hesitate to make an appointment to speak to myself.

I look forward to noting an improvement in your child's attendance over the course of the next 15 school days.

Yours sincerely,

Head teacher



Attendance Letter 2

Date:

Dear <Parents Name>

RE: Attendance of < Pupil's Name>

Further to my previous letter on <insert date of Letter 1> I am concerned at the continuing number of absences that <child's name> has had from school. Please find enclosed your child's attendance record. Unfortunately, there has been no improvement in your child's attendance at school since this letter and your child's attendance is currently <....%>. This is significantly below the national average of attendance of 96.1% for a primary school pupil.

I would be grateful if you could arrange an appointment to discuss your child's attendance with me. We will then identify and plan ways together of making improvements to your child's attendance at school.

I am keen to address these attendance concerns with you promptly to minimise the loss of learning for your child. I look forward to meeting with you to begin this improvement to your child's attendance at school.

Yours sincerely,

Head teacher