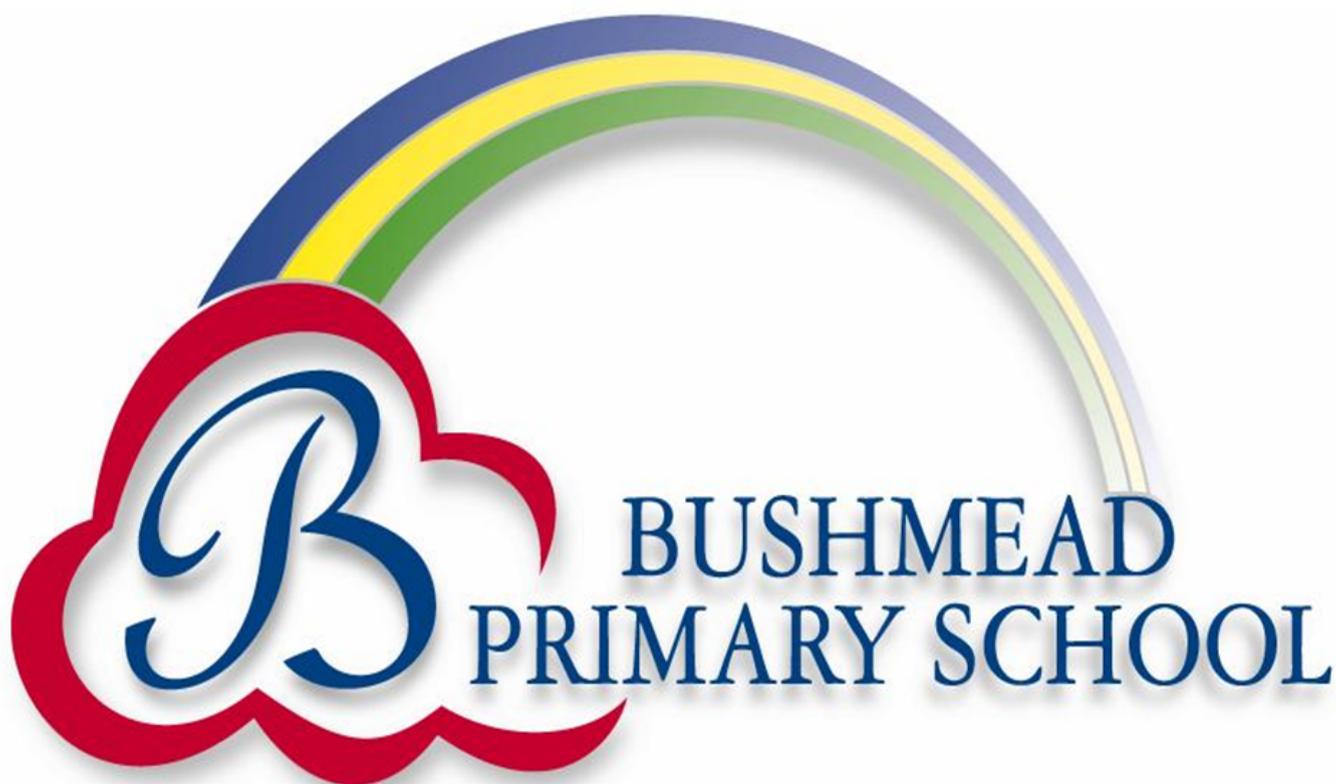


# ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS POLICY



<b>Written by</b>	<b>Kieron Leech</b>	<b>Date</b> <b>Autumn Term 2019</b>
<b>Approved by</b> <b>Headteacher/Governors</b>	<b>Full Governing Body</b>	<b>Date</b> <b>Autumn Term 2019</b>
<b>Date for Review</b>	<b>SUMMER TERM 2022</b>	
<b>This policy has been updated to reflect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, and it supersedes the HM Government Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners and Managers published in March 2015.</b>		

**The law states that parents must ensure that their child(ren) gets a full-time education that meets their needs. Children must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16. (School Attendance and Absence – gov.uk September 2016)**

### **What is attendance and lateness?**

At Bushmead Primary School, we aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and are on time wherever possible thus enabling them to make the most of the educational experiences offered. We also aim to raise awareness of attendance with children's families, making them aware of the importance that a positive attendance has upon school performance. It is vital that pupils are on time and making the most of their time in school. The school day begins at 8:55am – whether this be lessons or assembly – so being late can be extremely disruptive to the sessions and a child's education, particularly over time.

### **Why is attendance at school important?**

'Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school' – DfE Attendance document July 2019.

We, strongly believe that progress and attainment can thrive with increased attendance. We also value the strengthening of friendships and relationships in social times within the school day which a high level of attendance can help to develop.

### **Our aims:**

We aim to improve the levels of attendance through continuing to:

- promote a safe, caring and supportive school ethos
- create an atmosphere where all pupils feel valued, happy and welcome
- promote a positive attitude towards school
- deal with any difficulties experienced by pupils in line with our approach to behaviour and anti-bullying
- seek to improve parental involvement
- monitor attendance and lateness regularly
- increase the profile of attendance across the school

We will use a variety of strategies which seek to raise levels of attendance and punctuality. These will include rewards for outstanding and/or improved attendance both individually and as a class.

### **Target Setting**

We understand that there will be occasions when pupils will not be able to attend school due to various reasons. However, minor ailments should not stop your child from attending school. As a result, our overall school target for attendance is set at no lower than 97%. Children with an attendance below this may be contacted by a member of the Attendance Team within school.

### **Equal Opportunities and Attendance**

In circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend school, help can be given in relation to catching up with work missed. However, as children learn through practical and 'hands-on' approaches, they need to be present in school to make the most of teaching and learning.

We can offer:

- for long absences, providing reading books and writing books to take away, and recommending workbooks to support English and Maths
- teaching assistants and support staff providing individual support where appropriate
- specific support and encouragement from class teachers, teaching assistants and other specialist staff such as our Specialist Learning Support Assistant, differentiation of tasks to best suit the needs of the individual pupil
- use of Family Workers to support the family

## **ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE**

### **Parents' and Carers' Responsibilities**

- Parents are required by law to make sure that their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Parents and Carers are responsible for letting the school know about any pupil absence on the first day of the absence and for each further day of their child's absence
- If their child is not in school, Parents and Carers should indicate when he/she is likely to return

Parents and Carers can inform the school of their child's absence by any of the following methods:  
Telephone; personal contact; letter signed by parent, even if written by another family member

## School Procedures

The School uses attendance registers and electronic recording to store and monitor our legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.

- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Registers are returned to the School Office after the closure of the registration period
- The school's Attendance Team will regularly monitor pupil attendance percentages. If a pupil's attendance is falling below the expected percentage, parents/carers will be contacted via telephone or letter. This will state the attendance percentage of the child and offer support if required. If the attendance of the child does not improve, then further contact will be made by the Attendance Team and Family Workers inviting parents/carers into school to meet about their child's attendance. If there is still no improvement, then the school will liaise with the Education Welfare Officer. (Please note: medical conditions will be taken into account when monitoring attendance but we may contact parents to ensure the school is up to date in relation to a child's medical condition.)
- Lateness will also be monitored by the school's Attendance Team and parents will be contacted if their child is regularly late and missing significant amounts of the school day. Again, the aim is for the school and parents to work together to ensure that pupils are getting the most out of the opportunities available at Bushmead
- Bushmead Primary School promotes good attendance throughout the year with a number of incentives. Attendance is shared weekly in Celebration Assemblies and classes achieving the school's 97% target or above receive a certificate. Each half term, the class with the highest attendance is recognised in assembly and presented with a certificate and attendance trophy. Individual attendance is also highly valued and monitored. Pupils achieving 100% attendance for 1 full term receive a sticker, 2 full terms receive a certificate and children with a full year's attendance receive a badge/pencil/ruler.

## Absence

It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A note, or telephone message from a parent **will not count** as an authorised absence if the reasons given are not acceptable to the school. For persistent absences, the school may inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and a penalty notice may well be issued. Local authorities also 'have the power to prosecute parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (DfE School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures January 2015)

If children are repeatedly absent from school without any communication from the parent, it is our policy to:

- Contact the parent by telephone to enquire as to the reason for the absence
- Monitor absence and pupils falling below expectation will have a letter sent home to make parents aware of their attendance percentage. Continued poor attendance will then be followed up with a meeting between parents, Attendance Team member and a Family Worker
- Make a home visit via the Family Workers or Education Welfare Officer if a child's attendance continues to fall or does not improve

As we have a duty of care towards all pupils, if there appears to be an unexpected absence of a pupil without any call from a parent to explain the absence, then the school office will contact parents seeking an explanation. If they are unable to get in touch with a parent and there are still concerns over a child's absence, the school Family Workers will be informed and this may then lead to a home visit.

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

All schools are required by law to keep an attendance register and to mark any absence as either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. A child's attendance record is printed on their school report and in this way is reported to Parents and Carers. Children's attendance records are also carried with them to their next class or school. Authorised absence will only be granted for exceptional circumstances and this is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Application for authorised leave must be made to the Headteacher who will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school, if granted. If your child is due to attend a medical or dental appointment, we do ask that you try to make appointments outside of school hours to minimise disruption to their education. If this is not possible, documentation will need to be provided to confirm the absence is due to an appointment that cannot be missed.

The following table shows examples of authorised and unauthorised absences:

Examples of Authorised Absence	Examples of Unauthorised Absence
Illness, medical or dental appointment. Provided the school is satisfied the illness and	Where pupil misses registration and is unable to give an acceptable reason

appointments are genuine and documentation has been seen	
Special occasions as agreed with the school as an authorised absence *	Additional days taken for special occasions or days other than those specified by the school
	Shopping during school hours (including shopping for school uniform) or going to the airport to meet relatives
	Looking after brothers or sisters, or keeping a child home because a sibling is ill as well
An agreed period for family bereavement *	Absence for more than the agreed period.
Religious observance days, the number and timing of each will be determined by the school, e.g. one day for each Eid festival ^	Additional days taken other than those specified by the school
Off-site activities, e.g. music exams, representative sporting event during school time *	Term time leave or attendance at an event without prior authorisation by the school
	Several medical related absences unsupported by medical note and where attendance is below 87%

\* Authorised leave of absence for these situations may be considered by the Headteacher. Refer to 'Leave of Absence during term time' sections for guidance on school policy.

^ The Governing body has decided that only religious festival days will be agreed (e.g. one day for each Eid festival) within a total of 2 days during the whole school year.

### Leave of Absence during term time

Children are expected to attend school for 190 days per year. However, the law gives discretionary power for schools to grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances during term time. Our policy is detailed below:

- Parents and Carers must make an application for leave of absence during term time **before** any tickets are booked
- Only in certain exceptional circumstances will leave be granted. Leave of Absence for the sole purpose of taking a holiday **will not** be granted
- In considering any application for leave during term time, we will take into account: previous attendance record (below 97%, request unlikely to be granted), national testing (KS1 and 2 SATs, Phonics screening) and the timing in the school year (No authorised holiday in first two weeks of school year)

Parents must apply to the school for leave of absence by completing a school 'Leave of Absence for Term Time Leave' form (see appendix 2) available in the school office detailing the requested departure and return dates. Authorised leave is allowed for special occasions such as family bereavement, religious observances and off-site activities like music exams (see table above). All applications for these types of leave should be made, in writing, to the Headteacher.

### Failure to seek permission may result in the following:

1. We may seek advice from the Education Welfare Service with regard to unauthorised absences, and this may lead to a penalty notice being handed out to parents who do not ensure that their children attend school.
2. If parents take their children out of school for unauthorised leave that exceeds 20 school days, then their child could be taken off role.
3. In such instances, on return to the country, parents must contact the Admissions Team at Luton Borough Council to re-register their child as they will have lost their place at the school. Their place may have been taken by another child who is on the waiting list.

### Lateness

- Pupils arriving after 8.55 am will be recorded as late (school doors open at 8:40 until 8:55am)
  - Pupils arriving after 8:55am must report to the School Office so their attendance can be recorded
  - Pupils arriving after 9.25am will be recorded 'Unauthorised Late'. This will be considered an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example a medical appointment.
  - Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality:
- 1) Parents will be contacted either via letter or telephone to inform them of repeated absences and the number of minutes of school their child has missed

- 2) A meeting will be requested with parents where a member of the school's Attendance Team will be present to discuss the lateness
- 3) Further meeting if lateness has still not improved where a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team will be present as well as a school Family Worker
  - We expect parents and carers to collect their children promptly at the end of the school day as it is can be upsetting for children if they do not. Children who are not collected within 10 minutes of the end of the school day are taken to the school office and their names are recorded. This is a late pick-up.
  - In the unlikely event that a child has not been collected and there has been no contact from a parent/carer/family member, every effort will be made by the school office staff to contact parents via given numbers, emails and also by text message.
  - After 30 minutes, if parents still cannot be reached, the child's emergency numbers supplied by the family will then be attempted.
  - If no contact has been made and no-one has arrived to collect the child 1 hour after the school closing time, school safeguarding procedures will take affect and Children's Services will be contacted. **This is a child not being picked up and is different to a late pick up, and therefore action needs to be taken in the best interests of the child.**
  - The same rules apply for after-school club pick up. However, if a child has not been picked up after 30 minutes and no contact with family or emergency contacts can be made, Children's Services will be called at this point.

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1 – Letter home regarding attendance**

Insert name  
Address line 1  
Address line 2  
Address line 3

Date:

Dear <insert name>

RE: <Name of child>

From monitoring our registers, we can see that your child's attendance has dropped below \_\_\_\_%. (Please see the attached copy of their attendance record.) Even though the absences may have been authorised, it is important for the progress of your child that we try to improve their attendance record.

Therefore, if you feel that there any ways in which the school can assist, I would ask you to contact Mrs Beeston, our Specialist Learning Support Assistant, to discuss this so that we may support you in getting your child into school.

Whether you contact Mrs Beeston or not, we will continue to monitor your child's attendance and hopefully we will see an improvement.

Yours sincerely,

Mr K Leech  
Assistant Headteacher

**BUSHMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Request for leave of absence from school during term time**

*This should be completed before booking any travel arrangements*

**To be completed by the Parent / Guardian**

Pupil's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Registration Group \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date of absence request From \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Reason for application (needs to be exceptional circumstances)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1st Parent / Guardian details**

**2nd Parent / Guardian details**

First name \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of application \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

***I have read the schools leave of absence policy document***

Parent / Guardian 1 signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian 2 signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***For schools use only***

Current attendance (must be at least 97%) \_\_\_\_\_ No. of term days requested \_\_\_\_\_

If the child has had previous term time leave, please state dates and number of days taken

\_\_\_\_\_

***Leave agreed / Not agreed*** Date of letter confirming the decision posted to parent \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***If leave is to be authorised, the following must be completed***

Travelling abroad? Yes / No Country \_\_\_\_\_ Return date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Proof of return date (*tickets/e mail etc.*) \_\_\_\_\_