

# **ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS POLICY**

## **(INC. LEAVE OF ABSENCE)**



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<b>Approved by Headteacher/Governors</b>	<b>Full Governing Body</b>	<b>Date</b> <b>Autumn 2023</b>
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## **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 on 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 – the register followed by the first lesson of the day – so being late can be extremely disruptive to the sessions and a child's education, particularly over time.

We strongly believe that progress and attainment can thrive with excellent 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

## **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 97%.

## **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 (eg. medical absences with evidence), providing reading books and work set via Google Classrooms
- 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
- Family Workers to support the family where necessary

## **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 morning of the absence and for each further day of their child's absence. Failure to report absences to school can result in an unauthorised mark being issued

Parents and Carers can inform the school of their child's absence by either email ([office@bushmeadprimaryschool.co.uk](mailto:office@bushmeadprimaryschool.co.uk)) or phone.

For some absences, medical evidence may be requested in order to authorise the absence (eg. medical appointment letters. However we would ask for these to be arranged outside of school hours where possible)

## **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 closed at the end of the registration period (8:55am)
- 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.- 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. 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 with certificates awarded for children achieving 100% attendance each term.

### Absence

It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised or not. An answer phone message, email or note 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 to enquire as to the reason for the absence, on the day the absence occurs
- Make a home visit via the Family Workers or Education Welfare Officer if a child's attendance continues to fall or does not improve

### 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 and sent out with 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 appointments are genuine and documentation has been seen	Where pupil misses registration and is unable to give an acceptable reason
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
An agreed period for family bereavement *	Shopping during school hours (including shopping for school uniform) or going to the airport to meet relatives
Religious observance days, the number and timing of each will be determined by the school, e.g. one day for each Eid festival ^	Looking after brothers or sisters, or keeping a child home because a sibling is ill as well
Off-site activities, e.g. music exams, representative sporting event during school time *	Absence for more than the agreed period.
	Additional days taken other than those specified by the school
	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 arrangements are made
- 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 1) available from the school office or the school website. Authorised leave is allowed for special occasions such as family bereavement, religious observances and off-site activities like music exams (see table above). Please note, school must still be informed for these forms of absence so that registers can be completed accurately.

#### **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 roll.

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.

#### **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 with evidence provided.
- 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
  - 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.
- 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. When the child is collected, a reason for the parent's late pick up will be recorded.
- 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 phone, email and text message (if appropriate).
- 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 effect 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.

## Appendix 1 : Leave of Absence for Term Time Leave



For Office Use Only		
Actions:	Date	Initials
Date received and by whom		
Request entered on CPOMS & passed to Headteacher		
Paperwork returned to parents / carers		

### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

**You are not entitled to take your son/daughter out of school.**

In line with new government legislation, we have reviewed our approach to attendance. Parents of children with attendance below 95% will be contacted by our Attendance Officer. If attendance does not improve the headteacher and the Education Welfare Officers will take action. [School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

Are you aware of the impact of absence?

- One day off per school year = 99.5% attendance
- Ten days off per school year = 94.7% attendance
- Twenty days off per school year = 90% attendance
- 90% attendance across Years R - 6 = two terms of a School YEAR MISSED

Taking your child out of the school during term time is detrimental to their educational progress.

**Parents should not request a leave of absence for their children during term time. There is no legal right to do so.** Any agreement to leave is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Pupil Registration Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits in line with certain considerations as outlined in guidance from the Department of Education.

If the absence is not authorised and the student does not attend school at that time, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a **Penalty Notice of £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.**

**Failure to return on the date stated may result in an unannounced home visit and/or your child being reported as Missing in Education. Persistent absence may mean you lose your child's place at Bushmead.**

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

Name of Student:	
Date of Birth:	
Class:	
Date of first day of absence:	
Date of return to school:	
Number of school days requested:	
Reason for request for leave of absence during term time:	
Address and phone number of child/ren whilst absent.	
Copies of travel documentation attached	Confirm attached if applicable
Evidence of event:- medical evidence, death certificate, wedding invite etc	Confirm attached if applicable
Full Name and address of Parent 1:	
Full Name and address of Parent 2:	

Signed:

Date:

Name (in block capitals, please):

For School use only:	
Total percentage of all absence this academic year (or during previous year, if applicable):	
Unauthorised pupil absences this academic year:	
Absence record at Bushmead	

Approved? YES / NO

Signed by the Headteacher:

Date:

Feedback to parents / carers:

Unauthorised absence letter issued: YES / NO

Pursue with EWO: YES/NO