Policy Title	**ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY**
Committee responsible	Curriculum & Ethos committee
Last reviewed	June 2026
Next review due	June 2027
Who is governed by this policy	All pupils / parents at the school
Available on website	**YES**

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Regular and punctual attendance is important because

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both academically and socially
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

2. Legal Requirements

All schools, including independent schools, must maintain an Admissions Register and all schools except boarding schools must have an Attendance Register. **The Registration (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006** require a school to put the child's name on the Admissions Register on the first day that the child is expected to attend school. If the pupil does not attend, they will be recorded as absent – this can be authorised or unauthorised.

A school will authorise an absence if:

- the child is too ill to attend and the school accepts this as valid (although if the child is off for long periods the school might ask for proof from the doctor)
- the parent has got the advance permission of the school e.g. for a holiday, religious observation
- the child has a medical or dental appointment
- the child is being educated off-site
- the child has been excluded.

Schools have to inform the Local Authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or have missed 10 school days or more without informing the school of the reason.

Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under **section 175 Education Act 2002**, to investigate any unexplained absences.

3. Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.

- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents / carers and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:
- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

4. Definition of Absences

- 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 carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority, therefore not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.
- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

5. Procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:
- maintain appropriate registration processes
- maintain appropriate attendance data
- communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils
- have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness
- follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school
- inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence
- strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time
- work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality
- refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve
- report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the DfE where requested.

6. Registration

The school doors are open from 8.30am until 8.45am. This provides sufficient time for all pupils to come into school.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher in the morning and afternoon, by 9.05am and 1.20pm respectively. These registers are then returned to the school office.

All attendance records are documented using Bromcom software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

7. Late arrival

Once the doors are closed at 8.45am the only way to get into school is via the main door to reception. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.50am will be marked as late in the attendance record and this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.20am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

8. Reporting Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence with details of the reason for the absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details for parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U).

<u>First Day Contact</u>

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reason.

<u>Illness</u>

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from parents for the school to make their own enquiries.

9. Request for Absence during term time

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Our school have a panel of governors who consider requests for holidays in term time – see separate ***Holiday Requests Policy*** – and these will only be granted if the panel considers there are exceptional circumstances.

Requests for absence in term time will **not** be authorised**:**

- during the first term, when a pupil is just starting school, as it is very important for the child to settle into their new class
- during an assessment/test period – Key Stage 2 SATs
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes **any** level of unauthorised absence

If holidays are taken without approval, they will be recorded as unauthorised absences and in persistent cases parents / carers will be liable to a fine in accordance with government guidelines.

10. Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Bromcom attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.