



Bromesberrow St Mary's C of E (VA) **Primary School**

Attendance Policy

September 2023

Our School Vision:



'Shining Together, We Reach for the Stars.'

Our Christian School Values:

Respect, Motivation, Cooperation, Kindness, Pride, Perseverance

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled □

Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. Policy Rationale

Living life in all its fullness!

Our policy is that all of our pupils have the potential to Shine Together, We Reach for the Stars and we endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and most importantly 'welcome'.

Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. This policy seeks to ensure that parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting 100% school attendance and punctuality for all.

For a pupil to reach their full potential a high level of school attendance is essential. We understand that research indicates that;

- ✓ there is a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%;
- ✓ regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- ✓ regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- ✓ regular attenders find learning more satisfying;
- ✓ regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. We believe that high attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher (with support from the Pastoral Lead/worker)

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Works with social care and LA to tackle persistence absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances Any amendment to the attendance

register will include:

- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by direct phone call
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use
- Identify a need for an attendance meeting and plan to support improved attendance

4.6 Reporting to parents

- Attendance is reported through termly report cards to parents. Parents are made aware of the national expectation in relation to this.

4.7 Children Missing in Education

Anyone concerned that a child is missing education (CME) can make a referral to the Access to Education Team at Gloucestershire County Council.

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

4.8 Children Absent from Education

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Leave of absence in term-time

Absence during term-time for holidays or other events interrupts teaching and learning for the pupil, and disrupts the routine for others in the school. It can have a serious impact on progress and attainment.

On 1 September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These change the law about how and when schools may grant leave of absence during term-time. The new regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term-time for holidays and other special occasions unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Parents should note that there is no right to such leave; if granted, it is at the sole discretion of the headteacher.

Any request for leave must be made in advance; schools cannot grant such leave retrospectively. Any leave taken without prior agreement will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may lead to parents being issued with a penalty notice or being prosecuted in the magistrates' court.

The school will consider any request for leave on its individual merits, but leave will be granted only in truly exceptional circumstances.

Leave would not normally be granted where:

- A child's attendance is less than 96%
- There are concerns about the child's progress or attainment
- The leave is close to or clashes with any tests, exams or other events in school.

Exceptional circumstances

We define an exceptional circumstance as being 'a situation where by not approving would result in a decrease in the child and family's wellbeing'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Holidays where there is a significant need for family respite to be assessed on an individual basis
- Flexi-schooling requests to be assessed and agreed on an individual basis

Birthdays and shopping trips are not exceptional circumstances and neither is the lower cost of holidays during term-time.

If a parent wishes to request leave of absence, they should notify the school well in advance of the proposed leave commencing. The school will arrange a meeting between the parents and the Headteacher or Pastoral Lead where the request can be discussed in detail. Parents will need to demonstrate that their circumstances and/or the nature of the leave requested are truly exceptional.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

The school's procedure for targeting persistent unauthorized absence involves an initial meeting with parents to look at reasons behind poor attendance and a reminder of our rationale for good attendance. This meeting could involve exploring patterns of absence and putting in place an agreed action plan to raise attendance.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school promotes good attendance through:

Sharing the impact and importance of good attendance through events and publications

Celebrating good attendance through assemblies and newsletters

Sharing attendance improvements with children, celebrating improvements through praise and recognition. Using metacognition to support children to understand the link between good attendance and good achievement.

Period use of rewards for good attendance when deemed helpful

Attendance reports

Individual good communication and dialogue with families

7. Attendance monitoring

The headteacher and Pastoral Lead/Worker at our school monitors pupil absence on a regular basis, at key points throughout the year.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2) and to call each day to inform of further absence due to continued illness.

If a pupil's absence goes above 10 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will put we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. If your child's attendance falls below 92% you will be contacted via letter. If it continues to fall to 90% you will be contacted for an attendance meeting. The aim of the meeting will be to draw up an attendance plan to ensure that positive changes are made. It is compulsory that children are in receipt of an education.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board. The school collects attendance data through SIMS system and uses this to:

Track the attendance of individual pupils

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi annually by Headteacher At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |

| | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|--|
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| | | |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day |

Appendix 2: Leave of absence request paperwork and procedure

REQUEST FOR A LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Parent and Carers should be aware that the law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. The Department of Education allows a Head Teacher the discretion to consider authorizing a leave of absence in term time only in 'exceptional circumstances'

You may consider that a holiday will be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching and learning that their peers will receive whilst your child is away. Children returning from a leave of absence during term time are also unprepared for the lessons after, which build on the teaching they have missed and arrangements need to be made for individual children to catch up on missed work. Disruption to the continuity of teaching and learning is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

The school will consider any request for leave on its individual merits, but leave will be granted only in truly exceptional circumstances.

Leave would not normally be granted where:

- A child's attendance is less than 96%
- There are concerns about the child's progress or attainment
- The leave is close to or clashes with any tests, exams or other events in school.

Exceptional circumstances

We define an exceptional circumstance as being 'a situation where by not approving would result in a decrease in the child and family's wellbeing'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

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- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Holidays where there is a significant need for family respite to be assessed on an individual basis

- Flexi-schooling requests to be assessed and agreed on an individual basis

Birthdays and shopping trips are not exceptional circumstances and neither is the lower cost of holidays during term-time.

If a parent wishes to request leave of absence, they should notify the school well in advance of the proposed leave commencing. The school will arrange a meeting between the parents and the Headteacher or Pastoral Lead where the request can be discussed in detail. Parents will need to demonstrate that their circumstances and/or the nature of the leave requested are truly exceptional.

If requesting a leave of absence you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take you child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave.**

In the case of an unauthorised leave of absence of 5 days (10 consecutive sessions) the Head teachers will request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, with further warning to the parent/carer. Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A penalty notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the Penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

All leave of absence requests should be completed on this form by the parent with whom the child ordinarily resides. This should be returned to the school at least seven days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorized retrospectively.

I hope you will support our efforts to raise attendance and attainment at our school.

Yours sincerely

Laura Hankins Leonie Mison
Co-Headteachers

Request for a leave of absence during term time

Child's Name:..... Class/ Year

Group:

Pupil's address:

.....
.....

Date of first day of absence:.....

Date of return to school.....

Number of school days that your child will be absent from school.....

If a child fails to return within ten school days following the anticipated date of return and no reason is provided, there may be grounds (under some circumstances) to delete your child's name from the Admissions Register and register them as a Child Missing Education.

Please detail the exceptional circumstance for which you are requesting leave of absence:

.....
.....
.....
.....

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the Headteacher may need to request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A penalty notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay this it may result in legal action.

Name(s) of Parent/Carer(s) making application:

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Forename..... Surname.....

Address

.....

Signed Dated

Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Forename..... Surname.....

Address

.....

Signed Dated

(Please ensure you are giving at least seven days' notice of the proposed absence, retrospective applications cannot be authorised)

Request for a leave of absence during term time – School response

**Sent to each parent*

Dear

Child's Name:.....

Class/Tutor Group:

Your request for absence on the following dates to is

unauthorised / authorised

Attendance is currently

The request **does / does not** meet the criteria for 'exceptional absence'

In line with our policy we will be sending this to the local authority if the absence is unauthorised and the absence is 5 consecutive days. This may result in a fixed penalty notice.

Head teacher's Signature: Laura Hankins/Leonie Mison

Date: