



WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Bloxham C. of E. Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

Each year parents will be sent a leaflet called "Attendance Matters".

Expectations of parents/carers

Parent/carers will ensure their child/ren attend school, aiming for a 100% attendance rate and that they will contact school as soon as it is reasonably practical and certainly by 9.00am. whenever their child is unable to attend

Avoid taking child/ren out of school for non-urgent medical and dental appointments.

Parents to contact school on subsequent days if their child is still unable to attend

To ensure that their child/ren arrives in school by 8.50am and well prepared for the school day

To contact the school, in confidence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child/ren away from school

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Written by: M Ingall and A Herbert

Based on Oxfordshire County Council Model Attendance Policy

Date agreed by Governing Body: 30-9-19

Date for next review: September 2022

When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

Expectations of school

To ensure regular, efficient and accurate recording of presence / absence

To make contact every day with parents/carers by 9:45 if a child fails to attend if the school and hasn't been previously informed of child's absence.

To refer to appropriate support agencies as required such as a Home School Community Worker.

To communicate to all stakeholders clear expectations of what constitutes good attendance and why it is important.

Expectations of governors

To monitor the effectiveness of the policy through the Standards Committee

To have an assigned attendance governor/s to ensure effective implementation of policy.

School Procedures

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised; Medical (M) Illness (I) other e.g. funerals (C) Religious (R) Travelling (T), Unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).
2. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.55 am; all pupils are expected to be in school by this time. The classroom doors will also be closed at this time for to ensure children's security. Any child who arrives after this time will need to enter school by the main office door. The registers will remain open for 20 minutes and will close at 9.15am. The afternoon registration will be at 1.20pm with registers closing at 1.30pm

1. Any pupil arriving after these times will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.
2. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

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3. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.

Persistent Lateness

If a child arrives after the register has closed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the lateness is persistent and parents/carers fail to work with school to address the issues, the matter will be referred to the Home School Community Link Worker who will offer support. If there is no improvement, a Fixed Penalty Fine could be issued.

Response to non-attendance

If a child is absent, and contact is not received from the parents by 9:45, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone. If no contact can be made, either through work or mobile numbers, the school will use the contacts list provided by parents. Where there has been no response, or explanation, the schools designated safeguarding officer will be informed.

Where there continues to be no response to the school intervention, and the absence has persisted without explanation, the school will refer the issue to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or Children Missing in Education depending on the length of absence.

Ten Day Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council, which is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Persistent Absence

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to improve their child's attendance.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases may be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

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If a child's attendance falls below 90% at the end of any month the school will send a text to parent informing them of their child's current level of attendance. If a child's attendance falls below 90% over a school term the school will write to parents/carers expressing concerns about levels of attendance and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, there is a staged level of response in which the Headteacher will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the Home School Community Link Worker if there is no improvement.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] To any special needs he may have.

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to The County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- They allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- They fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;

Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

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Leave of Absence

As of 1st September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

As from September 2019, parents will be informed that leave of absence will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. This letter serves as an official warning so that if their child is absent for purposes of a holiday it will be referred to the County Attendance Team to investigate and parents may be liable for a penalty notice.

Attendance Awards

Incentives for regular attendance are promoted in weekly assemblies, and an award to the class with the highest attendance for the previous week is presented in assembly each Monday.

Parents will receive reports on their child's level of attendance at Pupil Progress meetings held during the year.

Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of policy

The Headteacher will present analysed attendance data including SEN, persistent absence and disadvantaged children at the end of each of the six terms to identify issues and trends to the LiLT.

The standards committee will review attendance as part of its terms of reference and to ensure attendance governor is in place.

The Headteacher will discuss specific concerns with the attendance governor/s as appropriate

Attendance Targets

Through the implementation of the policy, the following will be achieved:

A 96.5% + attendance rate

Clear and transparent procedures and expectations understood by all stakeholders

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006, including:

Attendance registers, by law, must be kept for at least 3 years;

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Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes (Phoenix report AO2) – alternatively electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made; these also need preserving for at least three years.
Entries in paper registers must be in ink;
All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

The registers must be safely stored on the on-line system.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence;
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity.

1. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason, i.e. shopping trip or looking after another sibling at home

2. Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits; Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site; most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.