



**BOURNEBROOK  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

# **Whole School Attendance Procedures**

New policy: 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024

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1 Introduction

Bournebrook C of E Primary School is a successful school and every child plays their part in making it so. Good attendance plays a fundamental role in supporting children's educational achievement, well-being and in keeping children safer. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for the transition to secondary school and, eventually, higher education, training and employment. As a school we aim to work with families to support good attendance.

The school hours are:

Gates & doors open: 8.40am

Gates close: 8:55am

Registration: 8.50am

Close of registration: 9.20am

Break: fifteen minutes between 11.00 – 11.15

Lunch: 12:15 – 1:15pm

End of School: 3.20pm

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that attendance registers are kept, that record which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day.

Registers will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. If allowed to remain unchecked, persistent absence and lateness can significantly undermine the school's efforts to raise standards. The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the school encourages good attendance
- How the school monitors attendance
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Holiday absence in term time
- Role of the WAS (Warwickshire Attendance Service)

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **2 Support**

To reduce persistent and severe absence school will work with families to provide ‘The right support at the right time’, this will include access to the Early Help Framework. Where barriers to attending school exists the school will work with families to work together to get the right support, listen to the child and family and make reasonable adjustment, review plans and identify and plan next steps.

### **2.1 Universal support**

As part of the support provided for all families

- A Graduated Response – Assess, Plan, Do, Review, all plans of intervention at each stage including offers of support either formal or informal
- Support pupils’ parents and carers by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school’s control, discuss and offer support to parents, carers and pupils also signposting to the right voluntary support. Where referrals are required for voluntary support, gain parent, carer and child voice prior to referral to services and organisations.
- Meeting with pupils their parents or carers who are at risk of persistent or severe absence at the earliest opportunity, should be a minimum expectation. This will support greater understanding of the barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them.
- A review of the support plans in place with a named school lead.
- Where support plans are not effective or followed escalation of the process will occur
- Further referrals will be made if safeguarding concerns are raised.

### **2.2 Additional support**

Some students find it harder than others to attend school and will need targeted or specialist support. School will work with students/pupils and parents or carers to provide support to remove barriers to attendance by building stronger relationships and putting the right support in place at the right time.’

The 'EBSA Pathway' seeks to respond to the growing number of children and young people who experience emotional challenges in attending school, an increase which has been seen both in Warwickshire and nationally. Should you require any additional support Please contact [ebbsa@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:ebbsa@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Individual plans may be put in place to monitor impact and outcomes – with reviews regularly to monitor progress and set new targets. In some circumstances a parenting order may be put in place.

### **3.3 Parenting orders**

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour.

The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months.

All parenting orders must specify a 'responsible officer' which will be named on the order. This should be the most appropriate lead practitioner working with the family

Data sharing will occur at all levels in school, with the local authority and the DfE. Attendance data is regularly shared and reviewed and patterns investigated.

### **3 Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Families**

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly, if they are of compulsory school age and registered at a school (see appendix for details of how the law applies to school attendance and how "parent" is defined in law). Parents and pupils should know the times the school day starts and finishes and when the register closes (see section 1, above); the processes for requesting leave and the process for informing school of the reason for unexpected absence (as follows).

If your child is going to be absent, parents must inform school as soon as possible and at the latest by 9.20 am on the first day of absence by calling school on 01676 540390

Parents must also ensure that school has up-to-date contact information for themselves and emergency contacts.

### 3.2 School

Head Teacher of school:

- Lead on giving attendance a high profile.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and protected time allocated to discharge those responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school confirms to statutory requirements regarding attendance.
- Consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some, all, or none of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision.
- Where there is uncertainty regarding an absence, make the decision whether to authorise an absence, or to request further evidence to support the decision-making process.
- Provide regular reports to the governing body on school attendance, including persistent absence, severe absence and vulnerable groups.
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, using parenting contracts where appropriate.
- Involve external agencies to support children and parents as appropriate to better understand and address the issues causing attendance concerns.

Attendance lead and other staff with designated responsibilities for attendance

- First day response: contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and record this information accordingly. Contact emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached.
- Update attendance registers.
- Regularly monitor and analyse data to identify pupil, class and whole school attendance concerns and to target attendance improvement support for those who need it most, particularly vulnerable groups.
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents.
- Promote regular attendance through the school newsletter, website and displays and ensure the school's attendance policy is readily accessible.
- Discuss projects and strategies with the Headteacher to improve attendance and punctuality for groups, classes or the whole school (eg incentive and reward schemes, certificates, attendance letters).

All school staff

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and a safe learning environment.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Adhere to the procedures in place within school to promote good attendance.
- Promote the link between attendance and educational attainment to pupils and parents.
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the head teacher.
- Discuss attendance concerns at an early stage with children and parents.
- Raise any concerns about attendance with the headteacher.

#### Governors

- Ensure compliance with the working together to improve school attendance.
- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually.
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, instigate a review of school's attendance procedures.
- Authorise the head teacher (or other designated person) to make decisions regarding leave of absence requests.
- Work with the head teacher in establishing equitable and consistent criteria against which leave requests will be considered

### **3.3 Warwickshire County Council (the local authority)**

#### School Attendance Support Team

Each school has a named contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can advise schools on attendance related matters, and with whom termly Targeting Support Meetings will be held.

### **4.0 Attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents.**

The school hours are:

Gates & doors open: 8.40am

Gates close: 8:55am

Registration in the morning: 8.50am

Close of registration: 9.20am

Break: fifteen minutes between 11.00 – 11.15

Lunch: 12:15 – 1:15pm

Registration in the afternoon: 1.15pm

Register close: 1.20pm

Unauthorised late marks will be given for pupils arriving after 9.25am.

End of School: 3.20pm

### **Fun Club**

Before school provision: 7.45am- 8.40am

After school provision: 3.20pm-5.45pm

In case of absence families should contact the school office on 01926 540390 before 9.25am.

### **5.0 Daily Routines**

As stated in DfE 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance states

'Alongside accurate recording of attendance and absence, effective schools have robust day to day processes to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality which are rigorously applied across the school. All schools are expected to develop processes that meet the needs of their pupils and contexts.'

The school manages day to day attendance by meet and greets on the gate every morning, register checks before 9.20am, follow up on unexplained absences, first day calling and home visits.

If families have not contacted school, telephone calls, messages and emails will be sent, with a home visit conducted to check on welfare. If no contact can be made emergency contacts will be called.

### **6.0 Celebrating Attendance**

To celebrate attendance of pupil's birthdays, non-uniform can be worn. Weekly birthdays are celebrated in Friday's celebration worship. During this worship the weekly attendance cup is presented to the class with the highest attendance and an extra breaktime given. Half termly attendance awards given for those children with 100% attendance, for a full year of 100% attendance children are presented with a trophy and a certificate. Families are invited to attend the celebrations.

### **7.0 Types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. As a school, we will always work with parents (and other agencies, as appropriate) to understand the reasons underlying absence.

#### **7.1 Authorised absences**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good



reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

## **7.2 Unauthorised absences**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. If school has followed its attendance procedures and a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, the school may see seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team or request legal interventions from the School Attendance Legal Team. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily.
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed.
- Days off for shopping, birthdays or looking after other children.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the headteacher.
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the head teacher.

It is the head teacher's responsibility to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence is authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, appointment card or similar. Parents should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence. Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue. As a school, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

## **7.3 Persistent Absence (PA)**

Persistent absence is when a child misses 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised and unauthorised (including illness, exclusion, holiday, etc). This equates to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year. Pupils who are persistent absentees are tracked and monitored and families informed.

## **7.4 Severe Absence (SA)**

When pupils miss 50% of their possible attendance, this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will damage any child's educational prospects and we expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to address this. These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive

support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

#### 7.5 National fine thresholds

From September, schools will have to consider a fine if a pupil misses **10 sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence** in a rolling period of **10 school weeks**. They should “not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices”. The threshold can be met with “any combination of unauthorised absence”. For example, four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late.

#### 7.6 Long-Term Sickness to be Flagged with Local Authorities

Schools will have to give councils the name and address of sick pupils who they believe will miss **15 consecutive or cumulative days**. Schools will also be “expected to inform a pupil’s social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school”.

#### 7.7 Mental Health Awareness

All schools should now be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

The guidance acknowledges “many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods”. But it is “important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly”.

#### 8.0 Leave of absence

A leave of absence from school is an absence that is authorized by a school for a specific reason, usually in exceptional circumstances.

#### 8.1 Leave of absence referrals

By law, maintained schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence. If leave is being requested for a holiday or extended leave abroad, approval should be obtained from the head teacher before making any bookings.

### **Leave of Absence taken in the academic year 2024-25 from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

The law relating to Penalty Notices is due to change with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence after this date will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).

- First Leave of Absence Offence: The amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
- Second Leave of Absence Offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.
- Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice). A Penalty Notice will not be issued and the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996

### **8.2 Religious absence**

School will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, eg Eid, and this will be marked as code R in the register. The day authorised will be that set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if the head teacher agrees that exceptional circumstances apply; this would be marked in the register as code C.

### **8.3 Participation in sporting events**

Parents can request leave of absence for their child to take part in regional, national and international sporting events. However, as always, granting leave is at the head teacher's discretion and she/he will need to discuss with you the length and frequency of the absence(s) requested and how learning will continue if absence occurs, eg the sports club or association providing an approved education tutor. Leave for a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school can be marked in the register as code P. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late in order to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the head teacher and is unlikely to be approved if it would occur regularly.

### **8.4 Participation in performances (eg theatre, television, modelling)**

Parents of a child performer can request leave from school for their child to take part

in a performance. A local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Before a licence is granted, school will be consulted and head teachers must be satisfied that the leave will not have a negative effect on the child's education. Where the licence specifies the dates that the child is to be away from school, the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the licence does not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise the leave request. Any absence authorised for the child to take part in a performance will be recorded as code C.

### **9.0 Escalation of Procedures.**

Attendance is reviewed on a daily basis, with formal reviews and data on a weekly basis. Every half term parents informed of their child's attendance. While school attendance review completed.

The headteacher monitors the attendance of pupils every 6 weeks. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, it will be deemed as persistent absence. The school will work with families through an individual approach to support them in rapidly improving their attendance. If there is no improvement in attendance a referral will be made to WAS, which may result in legal action.

Returns of school data are made annually to the DFE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts

### **9.1 Formalising Support**

Through careful monitoring and discussions with families it may be required to formalise a support plan with an agreed attendance contract, if attendance does not improve a referral to WAS will occur.

### **10.0 Children Missing Education (CME) Team**

If a child is absent for more than ten days, this will be reported to the Head of vulnerable groups and lead professional, as the child will be considered to be "Missing in Education". This will not apply if the child has been hospitalised for medical reasons. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent without authorisation for twenty consecutive days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

### **11.0 Warwickshire Attendance Service**

The school is responsible for liaising closely with the Local Authority's Warwickshire Attendance Service and will follow their standard approaches in managing attendance issues. Where all voluntary support options have not been successful, or have not

engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.

Warwickshire Attendance Service can use the following legal interventions/formalised support; Attendance Contracts, Notice to Improve, issue of Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, Attendance Prosecution, consideration of application of Parenting Orders. Warwickshire Attendance Service will decide which intervention will be most appropriate, however only after considering the individual circumstances of a family. The above voluntary support options are not appropriate for an unauthorised Leave of Absence in term time. Prosecutions for non-school attendance must be conducted in line with the Warwickshire County Council Non-school attendance and Penalty Notice code of conduct and the Code for Crown Prosecutors and must pass the evidential and public interest tests

### **12.0 Non-compulsory age pupils**

Although there is no legal requirement for a pupil to attend nursery, it is widely acknowledged establishing routines including good attendance in early years reaps benefits when children become of compulsory age. At the other end of the spectrum for pupils attending 6th form, it is important to establishing routines in engaging with independent learning and semi structured days as this will empower them in their future be it further education, apprenticeship, university or workplace. The DfE have now advised in the Working together to improve school attendance that: On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admission register at the time (except for a pupil who is a boarder). The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics. The data helps schools, local authorities, and the government gain a greater understanding of the delivery of education and the level of, and reason for, absence. It is therefore advised schools look to include the schools' expectations around attendance for these cohort of pupils, advising coding will be in line with the DfE guidance and what the schools' expectations are around notification of absence etc

### **13.0 Legal responsibilities**

Legal Framework The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude; to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

Parents/carers and guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive efficient, fulltime education by regular attendance at school or otherwise under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. Section 576 Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not;
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. If a child of compulsory school age fails to regularly attend the school which he/she is registered at, then the parent/guardian is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Schools must take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:
  - present;
  - absent;
  - attending an approved educational activity; or
  - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. The school will record absences in line with the DfE Attendance coding guidance

#### **14.0 Deletions from the register.**

The school will only delete a pupil from their register in accordance with The School Attendance (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the local Authority will be notified of this removal.

Our school will inform Children's Service when a child with safeguarding concerns is due to be removed from the school register.

#### **15.0 In conclusion**

It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school's success.

The Governing Body greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The Senior Leadership team are committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic targets and to support their social development and for this to happen, individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part

Why attendance matters:

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance

- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance
- If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week