



# Bournville Primary School

## Attendance Policy

**Date Ratified: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016**



**Signed By:**  
**On behalf of School Governors**



**Signed by :**  
**Headteacher**

**Review Date: March 2017**

# **Bournville Primary School Attendance Policy**

## **Philosophy**

Bournville Primary School is committed to providing high quality inclusive learning opportunities for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to reach their full potential, then excellent attendance is crucial. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Full attendance is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our pupils. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 % attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to emphasising to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home – school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, pupils and Educational Welfare Services to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

## **Principles**

- Ensure all staff are aware of the registration procedures.
- Teachers will complete, accurate registration processes at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within fifteen minutes of the start of the morning session and 5 minutes of the start of the afternoon session.
- Encourage parents/carers to contact the school office early on the first day of absence.
- Reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- Consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Regularly evaluate attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors.
- Inform parents and pupils of attendance rates and related issues.

- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent she/he will be missed.
- Have procedures that allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

### **Performance**

Targets for improved attendance will be set annually. It is important to set realistic targets and these targets will be set in consultation with the Education Welfare Service. Each year the governors will check whether these targets were met and, if not, try to establish why not.

Part of the evaluation process will be to look at what interventions have been successful, this will include considering: -

- Attendance data for individual pupils, tutor groups and the school as a whole.
- Has the school ethos improved?
- Has the behaviour of pupils improved?
- How successful have pupil re-inclusion plans been?
- Is the school a better place to be for staff and pupils?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the community?
- How well informed are new pupils about the importance of attendance and the policy and procedures operating within the school?
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) lessons or as a theme for any other curricular lessons?

We will strive to raise the profile of attendance through:

- Offering a targeted school minibus service
- Turn Up Ted
- Whole class weekly award system
- Individual gold, silver, bronze attendance certificates every two terms
- Attendance Matters Newsletter
- End of year attendance prize draw

Bournville Primary School believes that it is essential to keep this policy “alive”. Consultation and communication are key factors that will ensure that the Policy has impact in raising attendance.

“Maintaining and improving attendance of the whole school, or groups of individual pupils requires persistent vigilance”.

### **First day response**

First day response is an integral part of the Attendance Policy. Parents and pupils must realise that a pupil's absence will be noted and acted upon swiftly. First day response sends a clear message to pupils and parents that attendance is very important. This will take place within 30 minutes of the registration deadline.

For the schools policy of first day response to work efficiently:

- Parents should contact the school by 9.30am on the first morning that the child is away. Reasons for the child's absence should be given.
- If the parent has not contacted the school by 9.30am, then the parents of identified pupils will be contacted by text or phone call.
- Parents will be challenged if they fail to inform the school of the reasons for absence, or if the reasons given for absence are unacceptable.

**Authorised Absence:** an absence agreed by the Headteacher with clear evidence from the parents that show it is an exceptional circumstance

**Unauthorised Absence:** an absence not agreed or unexplained

**Medical:** will usually be authorised although we may request doctors' notes for those children with high levels of medical absence.

This procedure will be most effective if it is applied to every absence and gives a clear message that absences are not allowed for reasons other than those determined by the law. The procedure and the need for it should be understood by all and the school will do this by regularly writing to parents.

It is the view of the school that first day contact works by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of full attendance
- Addressing problems before they become serious
- Improving home-school liaison
- Sending a clear message to parents and pupils that if a child is absent they will be missed
- Alerting parents who may be unaware that their child is truanting and therefore may be at risk
- Requiring and promoting a high level of communication within the school: staff working as a team

- Reducing the number of pupils who have short-term absence, thereby reducing the overall absence rate
- Assisting parents and pupils to develop habits that reduce casual absence and encouraging early contact from parents

### **Procedures**

If no contact is achieved with the parent/carer of an absent pupil on the first day of absence, a text will be sent daily until they return. Any unexplained absences of 3 days or longer may be reported to the EWO, and further action decided upon.

For any pupil returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, the school will make provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system if necessary. In the event returning after a long-term absence, a Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) will be implemented. The PSP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible. Implementation of the PSP will follow North Somerset guidance provided by the Education Welfare Service.

In order for this policy to be successful every member of the school staff must make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their learning. This means ensuring that all teaching staff attend regularly, arrive on time to lessons and are well prepared.

### **Lateness**

Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration. Registers will close at 9.15am, children arriving after 9am but before 9.15am will be recorded as late. Children arriving after 9.15am will be recorded late after registration closes which is an unauthorised absence.

There are three negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late:

- The loss of learning suffered by the pupil themselves which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time in school.
- The disruption to other children in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task at hand.
- This can raise levels of unauthorised absence

The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness will include:

- Invite the parent/carer to an attendance clinic.
- Use of penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence

## **Parent Contracts**

If a child's attendance falls below 93% in any one term the school may seek to raise attendance by drawing up a parenting contract with parents / careers. This will enable the school to support the family in improving the child's punctuality and/or attendance.

## **Penalty Notices**

Accumulated unauthorised absences will result in a Penalty Notice being issued by North Somerset Council. These fines are £60 (per parent, per pupil) if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the penalty is not paid and the notice is not withdrawn the parent will be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

## **Absence in Term Time**

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 has been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as a matter of course as they are likely to be **unauthorised** and will lead to the issuing of a penalty notice (fine).

## **Exceptional circumstances**

Are defined as:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- **Exceptional significant** family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you.

The Headteacher will consider every above request individually but the **following will not meet the criteria:**

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.

Authorised officers have the discretion to issue a penalty notice without warning where the parent has chosen to take the child on leave during term time without authorisation or evidence is subsequently found to suggest a child was away from school with the knowledge of the parent and does not meet the statutory defences mentioned below.

The only statutory defences to the offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 are:

- The child was absent for medical reasons
- The LEA failed to provide transport when required to do so
- The absences were due to religious observance
- You had permission of the school or there was an unavoidable cause

If the school does not authorise an absence but the child is still absent, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Requests for approved absence must be submitted in advance.

Absence taken in May up to and including SATS week will not be authorised for Year 6 children.