



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Member of staff responsible: Sophie Smart

Ratified by Governors: 19 October 2022

Next review date: October 2024

Review cycle: Two years

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

### **School Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

We recognise that regular attendance and punctuality are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. In order to make the most of the learning opportunities provided within school, children need to have the continuity of provision which consistent attendance and good punctuality allows.

### **School Vision**

At Bush Hill Park Primary School, we believe that all children should have the opportunity to Be the Best they can Be! Our three values are Respect, Resilience and Responsibility.

### **Parents' and Carers' Responsibility**

*If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.*

Education Act 1996

Regular and punctual attendance helps to ensure our children are happy in school and achieving their full potential. Routine habits of work, formed when young, lay good foundations for future education and for the adult world of responsibilities and employment.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and frequent absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

### **Parents and carers are responsible for:**

- Bringing their children to school every day and on time.
- The collection of their children at the end of the school day.
- Impressing upon their children the importance of attending school regularly and the need to observe the school's code of conduct regarding behaviour, code of dress, homework etc.
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to poor attendance.
- Ensuring they are aware of the attendance policy of the school.
- Notifying the school regarding absence on the first day of absence by 9:00am. Where possible arranging dental and medical appointments outside school hours.
- Ensuring that holidays are not taken during term time.
- Make applications for exceptional leave in writing, giving the reason for the request.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

The School is responsible for supporting the attendance of their pupils and for dealing with problems which may lead to poor attendance.

### **The class teacher is responsible for:**

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Headteacher or Parent Support Advisor (PSA) where there are concerns and acting upon them.

- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation (but not necessarily taking this further – responsibility of office staff/Attendance officer and PSA).
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings.
- Setting an exemplary example by being punctual and having good attendance themselves.

**The PSA, with the support of the Attendance Officer, is responsible for:**

- Supporting parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils.
- Following up specific requests from the Headteacher for information about individuals.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence.
- Being sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and parent and recognising that some parents and carers have difficulty in understanding written communication.
- Responding promptly to issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised.
- Including information about attendance trends and class percentages in the newsletter.
- Promptly checking online registers have been completed and submitted by the class teacher on a twice daily (am & pm) basis to ensure that the ‘fire list’ is printed for use in emergencies.
- Ensuring prompt follow-up on unexplained absences (first day texting/calling).
- Ensuring registers are accurate.
- Collating attendance percentages.
- Processing and following up holiday forms.
- Monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Acting as a point of contact for teaching and non-teaching staff where concerns need to be raised or advice sought.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Generating warning letters to parents.
- Making referrals to Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- Ensuring that the attendance policy is followed and that the actions from EWS meetings are carried out.
- Liaising and discussing with parents’ issues relating to attendance.
- Fortnightly meetings with the EWS.
- Notifying (in consultation with the Headteacher) the EWS of the need for a Fixed Penalty Notice and providing support with prosecution.
- Feedback and discussions with the class teacher over individual cases.
- Ensuring procedures for class and individual rewards for good attendance are followed.
- Regularly reporting to the Headteacher and Deputy Head on attendance issues.

**The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- Overall preparation and implementation of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Promotion of attendance at all times.
- Informing the Governing Body of attendance data and how the school is addressing issues.

## Attendance Registers

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, we are required to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session pupils are marked present or absent.
- Attendance registers are legal documents which may be required as evidence in court cases.
- Registers must record whether each pupil is present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.
- When calling the register, the appropriate mark and/symbol should be selected against each pupil's name. In completing registers, staff need to select the appropriate symbol indicating where present. If a child is absent the attendance officer will follow this up with the parent/carer and input the relevant mark/symbol.
- Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register:
  - In the case of a pupil who has been continuously absent from school for a period of no less than four weeks and both the school and the EWS have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil.
  - Notification in writing has been given that the child is receiving education otherwise than at school.
  - If the child has been registered at another school.

## Punctuality

Parents and carers must ensure that their children arrive at school on time and are collected promptly at the end of the school day. Good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and into the wider world.

- Morning Nursery sessions start at 8.30am and finish at 11.30am. Afternoon Nursery sessions start at 12.30pm and finish at 3.30pm.
- In Reception, Years 1, 2,3, 4, 5 and 6 school starts promptly at **8.45am** and ends at 3.15pm. The classroom entrance points open earlier at **8:35am**, the children enter the playground and head straight towards their designated entrance points. They are greeted on the playground and at the building entrance points by support staff. Once in school they enter their classroom where they are greeted by their class teacher.
- Registers must be completed by **8:50am**, children arriving after this time are late.
- Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have taken. Time of arrival is recorded in the register if the pupil is late.
- Registers close at **8.50am**. Lateness after this time is recorded as an unauthorised absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- Every effort should be made to obtain a note from the parent if there has not been a phone message.
- Parents and carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence.
- There will be a first day of absence contact from the Attendance office for those families who have not contacted the school.

- If a child is absent on a regular basis, with no real explanation given, then the child is discussed at the next relevant meeting and the PSA/Attendance Officer will make unannounced visits.
- Parents and carers with problems getting their children to school on time can contact the Attendance Officer.
- If staff have any concerns at all about attendance, they will alert the PSA.
- Holidays, of any duration, must be authorised by the Headteacher.
- Any absence for other reasons must also be authorised by the Headteacher.

### **Marking of Attendance Registers - guide to symbols**

/am \pm Present

L Late during registration period

U (inside 0) Late after registration period – indicate in notes box the time of arrival and reason given (note required from home) Symbols for authorised absence:

B Educated off-site (not dual registration)

C Other authorised circumstances (not covered by any other code)

D Dual registered (i.e. present at another school)

E Exclusion

F Agreed extended family holiday

H Agreed family holiday

I Illness

J Interview

M Medical or dental appointment

P Approved sporting activity

R Day set aside exclusively for religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience (not work based training)

X Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory schooling

Y Partial and forced closure Z Pupil not on roll yet # School closed to all pupils

Symbols for unauthorised absence:

G Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of authorised holiday)

N No reason for the absence provided yet

O Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes)

The Attendance Officer/Teachers must obtain a reason for all child absences.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

It is vital to remember that the vast majority of children at Bush Hill Park Primary School arrive on time and every day. An important part of our attendance policy is that this good practice is commended and applauded publicly.

In order to do this, we:

- Award a certificate for the classes with the best attendance on a weekly basis in our whole school assembly.

- The absence of pupils with serious medical or SEND needs, or for those with necessary hospital appointments, will be taken in to account when calculating the overall attendance for the week.
- Publication of regular class attendance is published in the school newsletter and on our website.
- Children are awarded individually for 100% attendance half termly and termly.
- Children with 100% attendance are recognised in assembly at the end of the year.
- Report to parents and carers termly on their child's attendance.
- Letters of concern are sent to parents and carers when attendance drops below 93%, following which the Attendance Officer will meet with child's parents/carers.
- The PSA will identify barriers to regular school attendance by working with parents and carers and appropriate professionals.
- Educational Welfare Service will be asked for support when attendance or lateness continues to be a concern despite intervention by school.

### **Following Up Attendance Issues – Procedures EWS Education Welfare Service Meetings**

The PSA and the Attendance Officer meet fortnightly with the EWS to discuss any concerns and follow up the progress of individuals. Prior to the meeting the following information is collected:

- Attendance record for any child with less than 90% attendance
- Attendance record for any child whose absence shows particular trends
- Attendance record for any child who has been frequently arriving at school late
- Class percentage totals

Information is shared about previous cases and decisions taken about the next stages of intervention where this is appropriate. Decisions taken are recorded on the attendance monitoring sheet.

Following the meeting with the EWS, class teachers are notified of the outcome.

### **School Procedures in Cases of Intervention**

Although a range of strategies and actions will be taken on an informal basis, a formal procedure is applied when an absence remains unexplained:

- First day of absence contact is made by the school office.
- Discussion on an informal level with the child/parent and reminder about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- If attendance remains erratic, letters are sent from school drawing attention to the child's attendance.
- Parents and carers are invited to the school offering them the opportunity to meet with the PSA and EWS to discuss the pattern of attendance.
- If the parents/carers do not attend the meeting the next stage is for an approach to be made by the EWS either by letter or through a visit.
- Further formal approaches might then be made according to the LA's attendance policy.

### **Penalty Notices**

The Headteacher will report to the Governing Body in the 'Headteacher's Report' the attendance percentage for the school and on any specific trends and/or difficulties with individuals. As from

September 2015, the Governing Body of Bush Hill Park Primary School has agreed to the use of Penalty Notices to improve school attendance.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 gives schools the power to issue Penalty Notices in cases of non-school attendance. This is an alternative to prosecution. Prior to a Penalty Notice being issued, a formal warning letter will be sent to Parents/Carers advising that there will be a 15-day monitoring period for attendance to improve and for them to contact the Headteacher to discuss the school's concerns.

Currently the Penalty Notice is:

- A fine of £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent/carer per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- If the fine is not paid parents/carers may be prosecuted under the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure their child attends school.

A warning that a Penalty Notice may be issued will be sent to both Parents/Carers (where applicable) for any of the following reasons:

- Their child has an unauthorised absence.
- Their child is taken on holiday during term-time and without permission.
- Parentally condoned absences.
- Truancy.
- Persistent lateness after registers have closed.

Only the Headteacher can authorise any absence. Evidence of the reason for absence may be requested.

If a child continues to be absent without authorisation for 20 sessions or more during a three-month period, school will apply to the Education Welfare Service for a Penalty Notice to be issued. A Penalty Notice can also be issued if a child is absent for a family holiday for 10 sessions or more. Where there are two Parents/Carers with parental responsibility, it is likely both will receive a Fixed Penalty Fine.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

Applications for special circumstances must be made to the Headteacher in advance. Depending on the reason for the request, the Headteacher will consider to authorise or unauthorise the absence. Evidence may be requested. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Each request will be considered individually.

If the school grants permission such absences are authorised. If a child fails to return on the agreed date, the additional absence should be treated as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice Warning should be issued. Such situations may call into question approval of any further applications made by the family.

### **Religious Observance**

Parents/Carers must ask the Headteacher in advance for time off for religious reasons Parents may request up to **3** days in any school year for religious observance.

At all times we believe that a positive approach which aims for cooperation is essential if improvements in attendance are to be sustained

*Please read this policy in conjunction with the Local Authority's Attendance Guidance*