



Bassingbourn

Community Primary School

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Attendance Policy

This policy was ratified on: 14th March 2024

Implemented on: 14th March 2024

Review date: March 2025

Signed by the Headteacher: _____

Signed by the Chair of Governors _____

Principles

Bassingbourn Community Primary School aims to work together with Parent/Carers and the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer to ensure that all children registered at school attend every day and on time, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We aim to improve the achievement of pupils by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality by creating an ethos in which attendance and punctuality are recognised and seen to be valued by the whole school. At the same time, ensuring that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits from an early age. The recognised expected level of attendance at school is 100% unless pupils with chronic health issues or there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Good attendance by pupils is recognised and celebrated through whole school assemblies, an interactive display for the children to refer to.

Parent/Carers Responsibilities:

Parent/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that children of statutory school age (term after the child turns five) attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

Parent/Carers must:

- Ensure all children registered at Bassingbourn Community Primary School attend regularly and punctually everyday unless prevented from doing so by illness or medical appointment.
- Inform school in advance of any medical appointments during school time, parents may on occasions be asked to provide supporting evidence from the hospital, doctor or dentist, such as appointment details card/letter/text message in relation to the time requested.
- Ensure their child arrives at school in time for registration. Lateness is monitored and may be recorded as unauthorised.
- Inform the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that any problem can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Follow application procedures regarding a request for leave of absence during term time, which should only be taken if absolutely necessary. Leave is not automatically authorised unless considered an **exceptional circumstance**. Any leave taken during term time, that has been unauthorised, could be subject to a Penalty Notice/fine.
- Report any changes to the contact details to the Office to ensure the school has the most up to date contact information.

Registration

Reception to Year 6:

- All children should arrive in school with plenty of time to be in their classrooms ready to learn by 8.45am.
- Registers close at 9am. Pupils who arrive at school after this time will be recorded as L, late on the register.
- Pupils who arrive at school after 9am, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as U, unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.

Lateness

Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, Parent/carers will initially receive a letter informing them of the school's concerns. This will advise Parent/carers to speak to a member of staff to help address the issue. Should the lateness continue, Parent/carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Legal Panel for pupils who are of statutory school age and registered as 'U'.

Reporting a Pupil Absence

Parent/carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 9.00 am.

For any pupil not present at the closing of registration, and the reason is still unknown, a member of the office staff will attempt to make contact with the Parent/carers once the registers have closed.

The member of staff will:

- Phone the contact numbers provided by the Parent/carers to enquire about a pupil's absence.
- Leave a message on voicemail requesting parents to contact school regarding their child's absence.
- Failure to make contact with the Parent/carers to establish a reason for an absence may result in a member of school staff making a home visit to check on the welfare of the child and family.
- Complete the registers in accordance to the guidelines relating to correct usage of codes. Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a Parent/Carers to an enquiry regarding their child's absence from school.
- Log the outcome of the phone call on MCAS/BROMCOM, the pupil data system.
- Inform the School Attendance Officer should there be a particular concern regarding an individual pupil's attendance or lateness.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting evidence may be requested to authorise this absence. This can be a email which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, a letter that is headed from the medical professional or an appointment card. A period of absence will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment. Children who fail to return to school within a reasonable time following their medical appointment could result in an am/pm session being unauthorised.

Illness

From time to time, children become unwell with common childhood illnesses. Please see a table below of common illness in children and the amount of authorised leave associated with the illness (guidance from HSC).

Children who are unable to attend school due to diarrhoea/sickness can return after they have been 48 hours clear.

Children with mild coughs, colds, sore throats, sneezing and runny noses who are otherwise well can continue to attend school. However, if they develop a high temperature (above 38°C) they should stay at home until their temperature has reduced and are well enough to return to school.

Rashes and Skin Infections	Recommended period to keep off school	Comments
Athlete's Foot	None	Athlete's foot is not a serious condition. Treatment is recommended
Chicken Pox	Until all Vesicles crusted over	Care needed with regards to contact with Vulnerable children or pregnant staff members
Cold Sores	None	Avoid kissing and contact with sores. Cold sores are generally mild and self-limiting
German Measles	Four days from onset of rash	Preventable by immunisation (MMR x 2 doses) - care needed regards contact with Pregnant staff members
Hand, Foot and Mouth	None	Contact the duty room if large number of cases. Exclusion may be considered in some circumstances
Impetigo	Until Lesions are crusted and healed or 48 hrs after commencing antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment speeds healing and reduces the infection period
Measles	Four days from onset of rash	Preventable by Vaccination (MMR x 2)
Molluscum Contagiosum	None	A self-limiting condition
Ringworm	Time away from school not usually required	Treatment is required
Rosela (Infantum)	None	None
Scabies	Child can return after first treatment	Household and close contacts require treatment
Scarlet fever	Child can return 24 hrs after commencing treatment	Antibiotic treatment recommended for the affected child
Slapped Cheek	None once rash has developed	Care needed if close contact to vulnerable child or pregnant staff member
Shingles	Absent only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered	Can cause chickenpox in those who are not immune - it is spread by very close contact and touch.
Warts and Verrucae	None	Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools, gymnasiums and changing rooms.

Diarrhoea and vomiting illness	Recommended period to keep off school	Comments
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting - more	48 hours from last period of	

than 3 times in 1 hour	Diarrhoea and/ or vomiting	
E.coli O157 VTEC Typhoid Shigella	Should be off for 48 hours from the last episode of Diarrhoea Further time off may be required for some children until they are no longer excreting	Further time off is required for younger children under 5 as they have difficulty in following hygiene practices Children in these categories should be off until there is evidence of microbiological clearance
Cryptosporidiosis	Off for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea	Child required to be off from swimming for two weeks after the diarrhoea has settled

Respiratory infections	Recommended period to keep off school	Comments
Flu	Until recovered	Be careful where a close contact is a vulnerable child
Tuberculosis	School to contact Duty room for advise	Required prolonged close contact to spread
Whooping Cough	48 hours from commencing antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from the onset of the illness if no antibiotic treatment	Preventable by vaccination. After treatment non-infectious coughing could continue for many weeks.

Other Infections	Recommended period to keep off school	Comments
Conjunctivitis	None	
Diphtheria	off work until school receive confirmation from duty room of when they can return	Family contacts must also not attend. Preventable by vaccination.
Glandular Fever	None	
Head lice	None	Treatment recommended only in cases where live lice have been seen.
Hepatitis A	Off until seven days after onset of jaundice (or seven days after symptom onset if no jaundice)	School to speak with the Duty Room.
Hepatitis B, C, HIV, AIDS	None	Bloodborne viruses that are not infectious through casual contact. For cleaning of body fluids SSE Good hygiene practice is to be followed
Meningococcal Meningitis / Septicaemia	Until Recovered	Some forms are preventable by vaccination.No reason for siblings or close contacts to not attend school.
Meningitis due to other bacteria	Until Recovered	Hib and Pneumococcal meningitis are preventable by vaccination. No reason for siblings or close contacts to not attend school
Meningitis Viral	None	Milder illness. There is no reason for

		siblings or close contacts to not attend.
MRSA	None	Good hygiene, in particular handwashing and environmental cleaning are important to minimise any danger of spread.
Mumps	Child is off for 5 days after onset of swelling	Preventable by vaccination (MMR x 2 doses)
Threadworms	None	Treatment is recommended for the child and household contacts
Tonsillitis	None	There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need antibiotics.

Persistent unauthorised absence in a 4-week period may result in a penalty notice. Removal of the school place may occur if the child has 20 days consecutive days or more of unauthorised absence.

School Responsibilities

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Head teacher having overall responsibility in the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil. Where there are concerns, parents will always be informed by letter and or telephone conversation and given an opportunity to come into school to meet with designated staff.

If applicable, support strategies with a monitoring period will be put in place to help improve the attendance or lateness of a pupil. Should a pupil's attendance or lateness continue to be a concern despite the support strategies in place, with no improvement to the expected level set by school, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer for statutory aged pupils. This could result in a Penalty Notice/fine, or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, as per section 444 Education Act 1996. This may result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

The School Attendance Lead

Lateness and attendance is monitored daily by the school attendance officer who will:

- Scrutinise the registers, monitoring authorised/unauthorised absence and other reasons provided for pupil absence and lateness.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carers of identified patterns of lateness with an initial 'Late Letter'.
- Contact parents by telephone, email, or letter to establish a reason for a pupil's absence if reason unknown.
- Raise concerns with Parent/Carers once attendance has fallen below the threshold set of 96%.
- Offer support or sign post to other areas of support within the community.
- Remind Parents/Carers as to expectations around attendance through several steps:
 - Step One. A letter advising Parent/Carers of our concerns regarding the level of their child(ren) attendance and/or lateness

- Step Two, informal contact. This can be via telephone or a brief catch up at the start/end of the school day by any member of staff, to ascertain barriers to accessing education and offering support and signposting.
 - Step Three. A formal Parent Contract Meeting to be held in school, with Parent/Carers to discuss concerns and, working together, identifying support which can be offered and signposting. Targets will be set to improve the attendance and/or lateness. These targets will be reviewed at the end of an agreed monitoring period.
 - Step Four. Should the targets set at step three not be met following a review, despite every attempt by the school to support the family, a request for the issue of a penalty notice/fine or prosecution could be made to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer for children of statutory school age.
- Liaise with other external organisations in relation to a pupil's attendance and/or lateness.
 - Monitor pupils attendance within specific and identified groups
 - Monitor pupil absences for those with additional medical needs
 - Monitor pupils and follow procedures for pupils 'Child Missing in Education'.
 - Follow reporting procedures for parents who have requested to Home Educated their child(ren)
 - Follow procedures when deleting a pupil from roll
 - Meet with Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer on the allocated visits to school, who will also monitor the registers and follow up any identified concerns.
 - Monitor absences for illness and requests for leave to attend medical appointments.
 - Complete a Medical Needs Assessment on pupils with absences of 15 days during the school year
 - Monitor and act upon requests for term time leave of absence and ensure Parent/Carers are informed of procedures in relation to authorised/unauthorised leave

Only the Head teacher or a designated member of staff may authorise any absence for a legitimate reason, not all absence supported by Parent/Carers will be classified as authorised.

Definitions of Leave:

Bassingbourn Community Primary School expects attendance at school to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

Authorised leave:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason such as illness, subject to pattern of illness or a medical appointment where supporting evidence has been provided to cover the period of absence. However, there is an expectation that the pupil will be in school for registration or return to school after the appointment, depending where the appointment falls within the school day.
- Religious Observance - only day (s) exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong to
- The leave of absence has been authorised due to a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance.

Unauthorised leave:

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, even with the support of the Parent/Carers, such as shopping, hair appointments, visiting family or birthdays.

- Medical appointments where supporting evidence of appointment details have not been provided when asked for.
- There has been no reason provided by the Parent/Carers to support an absence.
- Failure to follow school procedures or inform the school when taking a pupil out of school during term time.
- A leave of absence that has not been authorised due to not being considered an exceptional circumstance.

Guidance for Parents – Term Time Leave

Parents do not have the right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Recent government guidelines have removed the discretion on head teachers agreeing to term time leave. Any requests for leave of absence need to be submitted **up to three weeks** in advance. Parents must complete a [Term Time Leave Request Google form](#) and provide any supporting evidence, if applicable, with their request. This also applies to parents requesting to take their child out of school during the school day. The Attendance Lead or designated staff will respond within one week to explain whether the leave has been authorised or will be recorded as unauthorised.

If the school suspect Term Time Leave has been taken but the parent/carers have not completed a Term Time Leave Request Form, we will write to all parent/carers giving them an opportunity to clarify the reason for absence and provide supporting evidence. Failure to respond to or provide supporting evidence will result in a referral to the Local Authority for unauthorised leave from school.

Exceptional circumstance (*definition of exceptional: rare, unavoidable, short*) will be considered on an individual basis, such as up to two days absence from school to visit a dying relative, death of a family member, attendance at a funeral or any unavoidable one off event, but the following examples of requests for leave of absence that do not meet the criteria of an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised and could be subject to a Penalty Notice/fine for pupils of statutory school age are:

- Cheaper holidays/flights in the UK or abroad
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or the end of term
- Trip of a life time
- Visiting family or friends who have different half term holiday dates
- Family weddings for more than 1 day or visits to see family abroad
- Relatives coming to visit
- Extension of leave if a pupil has not returned to school after an agreed absence if does not meet grounds for an exceptional circumstance

Penalty Notices

Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice.

If 3 or more term time leave Penalty Notices have been issued over a 3 year period then prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996 may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued.

Penalty Notices can also be issued for the following reasons:

- At least 8 unauthorised sessions over an 8 school week period (minimum 80 sessions) with no authorised sessions within the period.
- 90% and below mostly unauthorised over a longer period (must be more than 8 school weeks).

The fine for a Penalty Notice is £60 per child, per parent/carer, increasing to £120 if not paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child (ren) this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

The definition of parent in relation to a Penalty Notice includes and step-parent and the partner of a parent who lives in the same household.

You can find further details on school attendance and the law on the Cambridgeshire County Council website via the following link: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-&-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/school-attendance/>

DfE guidance can be found via the following link: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674212/Working-together-to-improve-school-attendance.pdf)

Term Time Absence Request

PRIOR TO APPLYING FOR TERM TIME ABSENCE PLEASE READ THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education through regular attendance at school or otherwise (e.g. elective home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996).
2. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school/academy they are registered at, the parent/carer will be guilty of an offence (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996).
3. School attendance is vital for educational progress and we strongly discourage term time absence.
4. There is no entitlement to have leave of absence during term time and Headteachers are unable to authorise absence unless it is **evidenced** that the request an **exceptional circumstance** in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 & subsequent amendments.
5. The expectation is that all children aspire to achieve 100% attendance at school, with a minimum of 96% unless there are exceptional authorised reasons for absence.
6. **A Parent/carer is defined** under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 as: the natural parent of a child, whether they are married or not; anyone who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child (e.g. partner, step-parent, sibling over the age of 18 or grandparent).
7. Department of Education (DfE) Guidance states good attendance should be promoted, and absence should be challenged and addressed early to ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
8. **Penalty Notices** are used as a deterrent to absence during term time. The Local Authority (LA) has the statutory duty to issue Penalty Notices and/or process legal action upon submission of appropriate evidence by said academy. A Penalty Notice is a fine of **up to £60 per parent, per child**, and failure to pay will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court where a prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 will be heard; if convicted you may be fined up to £2500.
9. All requests will be considered on an individual basis and **must be received in advance** (we ask for at least 3 weeks in advance of the absence occurring where possible to allow for administering the request).
10. **If a request is refused the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.** All unauthorised absence will carry a warning that legal action may be taken; whether this action takes place will depend on the amount of sessions/days absence requested. The LA has a minimum threshold where if the absence is for less than that minimum (normally 6 sessions (3 days)) a Penalty Notice would not be requested however, should there be subsequent unauthorised absence within the following 30 school days of the requested absence, all absence will form part of a wider absence period and action could be taken. If the absence is for more than the LA minimum, a Penalty Notice will normally be automatically requested upon your child's return to school.
11. If the period of absence requested is **authorised**, the requested dates must be adhered to. Failure to travel and return on the requested dates, causing additional absences to be recorded as unauthorised, may lead to a legal sanction being imposed if evidence cannot be provided, at your own cost, to verify the exceptional cause of the additional absences.
12. If absence is **not requested in advance** and it is suspected that absence from school is due to unauthorised reasons e.g. holiday or unexplained absence, you will be required to provide evidence to prove the absence was for legitimate authorised and exceptional reasons; failure to do so may result a Penalty Notice being issued.
13. Your child may also be registered as 'Child Missing Education' with the LA and their place at the academy may be at risk if they have unauthorised absence for 20 days or more and we cannot establish your child is definitely returning.

A holiday may be cheap during term time but a child's education is priceless.