

Bozeat Community Primary School



Attendance Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Body

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Next review due by: November 2024

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1. Introduction

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances, it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we must give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. All children may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Attendance is recorded in sessions, with 2 sessions a day. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given.

This includes:

- **Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.**
- **Truancy before or during the school day.**
- **Absences which have never been properly explained.**
- **Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.**
- **Holidays in term time for which leave of absence has not been granted.**

Parents are expected to contact school by 8:45am every day the child is absent.

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. School Procedures

4.1 Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Absent.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry.
- The amended entry.
- The reason for the amendment.
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will not be kept open.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

A message can be left on the school absence telephone line or alternatively an email can be sent to the school office.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

4.5 Following-Up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If the school has not heard from parents by 10.00am, the school office will ring parents to discuss the absence. If the school is unable to contact parents the child will be marked as 'missing'. If there is no contact with parents then a risk assessment will be carried out by the DSL's and a home visit will take place if deemed appropriate.

4.6 Reporting to Parents

The school operates a weekly tracking system monitoring attendance and rewards individual achievements in this area. The headteacher and office administrator will meet fortnightly to review attendance. Pupils whose attendance is below 96% or those with 10 or more sessions of unauthorized absence will be discussed at this meeting. Where appropriate, parents will be contacted.

Parents will be directed to view a copy of attendance for the term at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer term.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- One or more parents is a member of the armed forces and has been or is due to be deployed overseas within the last or next 6 months and evidence can be provided to support this.
- One or more parents is a member of the police, fire or medical NHS staff who has restricted leave due to their job and evidence can be provided to support this.
- Death of a parent, grandparent, step parent, sibling, or step sibling who is living overseas and whose funeral will be overseas.
- Terminal illness of immediate family member (this includes parent, step-parent and siblings who have less than 3 months anticipated left to live).

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 4.2 and 4.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

5.2 Legal Sanctions

Schools can refer parents for fines for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to refer for a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

6. Attendance monitoring

The office administrator monitors pupil absence on a fortnightly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

The expectation is that parents will call the school each day their child is ill.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

All Classroom Staff/Office Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To sensitively promote good attendance with the aim of 100% • To maintain accurate records of attendance, taking the register at the start of the morning and afternoon session using the codes as in the appendix • To alert the headteacher where there is poor attendance • To welcome back pupils after a prolonged absence • To recognize and reward good attendance with letters home and certificates • Liaise with partner secondary schools, providing attendance information as part of the transfer documentation
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contact the school by 8.45am each day the pupil is ill and absent from school • If absence is on-going contact the school office on each day of the absence • To not take holidays during term time • To ensure their child arrives on time at the start of the school day • To inform the class teacher of any known on-going medical needs and concerns • To provide medical evidence as required by the school • To attend attendance meetings at the school as required
Office Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor all pupil attendance on a daily basis • To monitor registers to ensure they are correct and an accurate report • To follow up and discover cause of absence for all pupils • To monitor pupils causing concern by using SIMS User Defined Group Reports • Send home letters for pupils when attendance causes concern • Monitor pupil lateness, reporting to Headteacher • Discuss attendance concerns at fortnightly meeting with Headteacher • To follow up actions from fortnightly meetings
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for this policy • Ensure attendance has a high profile in the school • Action all requests for holiday during term time as unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances • Monitor all attendance matters at two weekly meeting with the office administrator
Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy • Ensure that the attendance policy is carried out • Ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor termly progress • Take responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly • Take responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents
Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make every effort to maintain a good attendance record so they can achieve their full potential • Arrive on time for school

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined

		the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day