

BOTLEY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Botley School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). See codes.

Only the Head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

For Reception to Year 6 children, school starts at 8.45 a.m. and morning registration will take place at **8.50 a.m.** Attendance will be recorded as (/ \).

Any child who comes to school after register has closed at **9.00 a.m.** will be recorded as (L) late. (Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.)

After **9.15 a.m.** they will be recorded as (U) unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

In **Reception** classes the afternoon registration will be taken at **1.00 p.m.** and close at **1.15 p.m.** In **Years 1 to 6** the afternoon registration will be taken at **1.15 p.m.** The registers will close at **1.30 p.m.**

Absence from School

• **First Day Absence**

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach ache etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. **Pupils should miss as little time as possible.**

Absence may be authorised if the school has notification from the parents that the child is ill. Parents are expected to contact the school by 9.00a.m. on the first day of absence and subsequent days of absence unless agreed otherwise. If a phone message is left then they must leave their full name, their child's full name and class and a reason for the absence. **If the absence is longer than one day there should also be a letter from the parent on the day of the child's return, clearly stating the reason for the absence.**

When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. If the child has a medical appointment with the doctor or dentist that cannot be made outside school hours, this may be considered as an authorised absence. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

Regular absences for medical reasons will be raised as a concern with parents. Parents must request the period of absence or inform the school in advance.

An absence may not be authorised, even if the parents give a reason, if the absences are persistent. In the case of repeated absence due to illness, the school may request confirmation from the GP that the child has a medical condition that seriously impacts on their ability to attend school regularly.

• **Third Day Absence**

If parents fail to notify the school of a child's absence and school have not been successful in contacting the parent/carer a formal letter will be sent asking the parents to contact school immediately and requesting information regarding the absence. On the third day of absence school will also contact the Local Authority to report a child as missing education.

• **Ten Day Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to the Safeguarding/Missing Pupils Team. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the actions they have taken. If there has been four weeks of absence, a child will lose their place (and breakfast and after school place) meaning that if they return parents will have to reapply and/or join the continued interest list.

Absence Notes

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s via a school/parent meeting.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to The County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases may be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Our Home/School Agreement promotes good attendance as do other rewards and incentives for classes and individuals.

Leave of Absence

As of 1st September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission in writing from the Headteacher at least two weeks prior to the leave of absence period in question. Even in extreme circumstances the school must consider the educational impact of any absence on a pupil's progress and will look carefully at previous attendance before making a decision. Parents' annual leave, financial costs (cheaper holidays) or a family birthday will not be considered exceptional circumstances. Where parents wish to take their children away from school for a long period, the Headteacher will discuss the impact such a break would have on the child's education.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as circumstances which are **rare** (unlikely to ever happen again in the child's time in school), **significant, unavoidable and short**.

Some examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave *may* be granted during term time are as follows:

- Out of school programmes or events such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement or competition such as County or National level. Documentary evidence of the event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444 (3) (c), states that absence may be authorised, "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs".
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; leave will only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there will be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.
- Short (part-day) absences for unavoidable events such as external music examinations will be considered

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above). If there is another period of unauthorised absence within twelve calendar months, parents will be fined.

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance

- 'Best Attendance' and 'Early Bird' awards are given out weekly to classes in our Congratulations Assembly.
- The 'Attendance Teddy Bear' – Samson, is also awarded to a class each week.
- A display of weekly class awards is situated outside the Head teacher's office.
- Class Attendance statistics are published weekly in the school newsletter.
- Individual Attendance awards are given out termly.
- Postcards will be sent home termly to congratulate children on good attendance.
- There will be a termly celebration tea with children who have good attendance with senior members of staff.

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the Senior Leadership Team and Home School Community Link Worker will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

- Attendance registers, by law, must be kept for at least 3 years;
- Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes (Phoenix report AO2) – alternatively electronic back-ups can be made; these also need preserving for at least three years.
- Entries in paper registers must be in ink;
- All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

The registers must be safely stored.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence;
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity.

1. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

2. Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

BOSHC (Before and After School Care)

Admissions

It is the responsibility of the Play Leader to ensure than an accurate record is kept of all children in the Club, and that any arrival or departure to and from the premises is recorded in the register. The register will be kept in an accessible location on the premises at all times (for exemptions to this rule, see the Visits and Outings policy). This process will be supplemented by regular head counts during the session.

Records of daily registers will be kept by BOSHC for at least two years from the date of the last entry.

Arrivals

On arrival, a member of staff will immediately record the child's attendance in the daily register, including the time of registration.

Departures

If the child is to be collected by someone other than the parent/carer, this must be indicated to a member of staff and recorded before the beginning of the session. The adult nominated to collect a child should be one of those named on the Child Information and Permissions Form. Only adults with suitable identification will be authorised to collect a child.

Permission and arrangements for children leaving BOSHCH alone at the end of a session will be a matter for discussion between the Play Leader and parents/carers, based on an understanding of a child's age, maturity and previous experience. Written consent for children leaving BOSHCH alone must be submitted to the Club before such arrangements are able to commence. No child under the age of 8 will be allowed to leave BOSHCH unaccompanied.

If the parent/carer or alternative nominated adult is going to be late to collect their child, staff must be informed as soon as possible. If the designated adult is late in picking up their child without prior warning, the provisions of the Uncollected Child Policy will be activated.

Should parents/carers be delayed in collecting their child they should contact the Club to inform them. Charges of £10 will be incurred for every 15 minutes late or part thereof i.e. 6.01 p.m. – 6.15 p.m. £10 6.16 p.m. – 6.30 p.m. £10. Under circumstances where delay is unavoidable these charges can be waived at the discretion of the Play Leader.

Upon departure the register will be marked to show that the child has left the premises. The time of departure will also be recorded.

Absences

If a child is going to be absent from a session, parents must indicate this to BOSHCH in advance. Absences due to illness and such like are chargeable to the parent.

Parents/carers **must** give a minimum of 4 weeks notices of holiday or other planned absences in writing. If notice is not given sessions will still be payable.

If a child is absent without explanation for more than three consecutive days, staff will contact the parents/carers to try to ascertain the reasons behind this.

Escorting Children between School and BOSHCH

Where children are escorted between school premises and BOSHCH, the following procedures will be carried out:

Botley School Governors via their representative, the Business Manager (Dawn Davis) will ensure that a thorough risk assessment is carried out and regularly reviewed, according to the provisions of the Risk Assessment Policy.

A contact within the school will be identified, with whom the Play Leader will liaise. Normally this will be the Business Manager, Dawn Davis or the Headteacher, Alison Marsh.

A clear agreement will be reached between BOSHCH and the school about when responsibility for children's safety is officially transferred.

A regular meeting place for children will be established within both the school and BOSHCH.

If a child is absent from BOSHCH without prior warning, staff will check to see if they attended school that day – they will not simply accept the word of other children. If the whereabouts of the child is not clear, staff will immediately inform the designated contact at the school and the parents/carers.

Transport

When escorting children by minibus or other private vehicle, staff will ensure that the following rules are always adhered to:

- In addition to the driver, there will always be at least one adult supervising at all times. All adults who are involved in the transportation of children will have an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check.

- A minibus driver will have a valid Section 19 Small Bus Permit/or a Restricted O licence, suitable for driving a minibus and escorting children. All vehicles will be suitably insured
- All children will be wearing seatbelts and if applicable a child restraint in order to conform to current legislation.

Children Attending Nursery Classes or Day-care

8.50 a.m. – 11.40 a.m. – Nursery morning session (as part of the 15 hrs free nursery provision)
12.30 p.m. – 3.20 p.m. – Nursery afternoon session (as part of the 15 hrs free nursery provision)

8.50 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. – Nursery morning session plus lunch
11.40 a.m. -3.20 p.m. – lunchtime plus Nursery afternoon session

8.50 a.m. – 3.20 p.m. (includes lunch and additional Nursery a.m. or p.m. session to make a whole day.

8.45 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. Caterpillars (2 year old's) session (Monday to Thursday)

N.B. Parents should inform school if their child is unable to attend Caterpillars, Nursery or Day Care so staff know not to expect them.

Date: November 2017

Signed: *L. Desai* (Chair of Governors)

Bears an electronic signature only