

**Bushfield Road
Infant School**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

Bushfield Road Infants School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all students are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised (see below).

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Bushfield Road Infant School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents and all staff.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered support from staff, usually the Attendance Officer. The Education Welfare Officer will be informed if attendance continues to be an issue.

Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school on the first day of absence - by phone call or in writing. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise

over a child's attendance. Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Parents whose first language is not English or who have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff (not just teaching and pastoral staff). Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently. It is the responsibility of the school to monitor and inform the Education Welfare Service of attendance related problems.

Registration

Registration will be called promptly at 9.00 am and at 1.15pm and will be marked in accordance with the list of symbols as set out in the register.

Registers will close at 9.05 am and at 1.20 pm. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, they will be marked as 'absent'. Pupils who arrive after the registers have closed should report to the general office and sign the School Late Book. (The attendance officer will amend the register entry to read 'absent/late'.) If a pupil is persistently late, the attendance officer will contact the parents.

Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in school after the registers have closed and an unacceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the pupil has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

All class teachers will take registers in each of their classes and will notify the year head as soon as possible of any absenteeism.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

An oblique stroke is used to record presence with a stroke in the reverse direction for the afternoon session.

Bushfield Road School records absences in accordance with the latest guidance from the DfEE. The following codes for authorised/unauthorised absences are listed below:

Authorised Absence

- B Pupil educated off site (not dual registration)
- C Other authorised circumstances (bereavement, agreed exceptional occasions, performances, other approved absences not covered by other codes)
- D Pupil attending another educational institution with Dual Registration
- E Excluded
- H Family holiday (for which leave has been granted)
- I Illness
- M Medical and dental appointments
- R Religious observance
- S Approved study leave
- T Traveller absence

Approved Educational Activity (Authorised absence)

- P Approved sporting activity
- V Educational visit or trip (UK/Overseas)
- W Approved work experience

Unauthorised Absence

- G Leave of absence for Family Holiday, not agreed or days in excess
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- O Unauthorised absence (Not covered by other code)
- U Late (After registers closed)

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- the pupil was ill
- the pupil was granted leave of absence agreed by the Headteacher in an exceptional circumstance
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within distance of the child's home, and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for any of the following:
 - the child's transport to and from school
 - boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school
 - enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home.
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (6) are met
- there is a family bereavement or crisis
- the pupil is attending interview with either a prospective employer or in connection with an application for a place at another school.

- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional occasion (e.g. if a pupil is attending the graduation of a parent/older sibling)

Absence should be **unauthorised** if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances)
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (eg a birthday)
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday (see below)

Holidays / Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the law has changed and there is no longer any entitlement for parents to take children on holiday during term time.

The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. An application must be made in advance to the Headteacher by a parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. Evidence must be provided at the time of application to support the request. Retrospective consent will not be granted.

Penalty notices have been introduced under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 as an alternative to prosecution, for failing to ensure a

child's regular school attendance. Where a child has at least 10 school sessions (half days) recorded as unauthorised absence due to taking holidays in school term time, a penalty notice may be issued to all parents/carers by the local authority. If a penalty notice is issued, each parent/carer will have 21 days from the date of issue to pay £60. After 21 days it will increase to £120 per parent/carer, per child. Failure to pay a penalty notice within 28 days will result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under section 444(1/1A) of the Education Act 1996, for failing to secure the regular school attendance of a child. Persistent unauthorised absence due to leave of absence in term time may result directly in prosecution.

Procedures for following up Absence

Absences must be explained by parents on the **first day of any absence**. Notes, letters and telephone message slips should be retained by the attendance officer for recording purposes.

On the third day of any unexplained absence the attendance officer will telephone the parents/carers or the contact names. Failure to respond to this by parents will result in the involvement of the Educational Welfare Officer. Parents of any child deemed as vulnerable or of Child Protection concern, may be contacted by the attendance officer earlier than the third day of absence. Follow up home visits may also be conducted by the attendance officer and/or Education Welfare Officer should no contact be made by telephone.

When pupils return to school after a period of absence they should bring a note detailing the reason for the absence.

If a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer during their consultation visit.

Notes from parents will be kept by the attendance officer in the attendance file. All telephone messages regarding absence/lateness are to be recorded on the telephone message chart and/or in SIMS attendance records.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Bushfield Road Infants will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken. Early intervention often prevents more frequent absences.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, and, support and inform policy/practice.
- Good attendance will be praised appropriately.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc.) of the importance of good attendance. The Attendance Officer will also promote good attendance by engaging with parents informally before an attendance issue becomes a cause for concern.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be reintegrated back into school upon their return.
- Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.
- The Headteacher will make an annual report to the school's Governing Body on attendance matters.
- The Attendance Officer/Headteacher will have regular meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

- Use of the SIMS (computer) package to analyse data and statistics.

Attendance Statistics

All schools are required by North Lincolnshire Education Authority to submit attendance figures to the Education Welfare Service no later than 10 days after the start of the new term. Statistics on attendance are compiled for all schools in the North Lincolnshire area for each term and a copy is returned to the school. The statistics are presented to the Special Needs Sub Committee.