Bushfield Road Infant School

Attendance Policy 2026–27

Day-to-day attendance contact: Mrs K Stuart, Attendance Officer
Named governor for attendance: Mr D Batley
Date approved: November 2026
Review date: Autumn 2027, or sooner if guidance changes

1. Our commitment

At Bushfield Road Infant School, good attendance helps pupils feel part of their school community, build secure relationships and make the most of their learning. Our values of **Kindness, Teamwork and Curiosity** shape the way we work with pupils and families about attendance.

We set high expectations for attendance and punctuality. We also recognise that absence can be a sign that a pupil or family needs support. We will work with parents and carers to understand barriers early, agree practical help and, where needed, involve other services.

This policy applies to all pupils. It should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, child protection, behaviour, SEND, medical needs and children missing education policies.

2. Expectations

Pupils are expected to attend school every day that it is open, on time and ready to learn, unless they have a valid reason for absence.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Contact the school on the first day of absence, explaining the reason and expected date of return.

- Keep the school informed if an absence continues, or circumstances change.
- Work with the school when attendance concerns arise.

The school day begins at **8.45am**. The morning register is taken at **8.50am** and closes at **9.00am**. Arrival after 9.00am is recorded as late. Arrival at or after 9.30am, after the register has closed, is normally recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session, unless an appropriate exception applies. The afternoon register is taken at **1.00pm**.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will set expectations, review attendance information and ask leaders about the impact of the school's work to improve attendance.

The Headteacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Learning Mentor will lead the school's attendance work, ensure that this policy is followed, review attendance patterns and work with families and partners where support is needed. All staff are aware that attendance is everybody's responsibilty.

The Attendance Officer will monitor attendance, follow up unexplained absence, maintain attendance records and coordinate support with SLT and relevant staff.

The Learning Mentor and members of the senior leadership team (SLT) may carry out welfare checks when a pupil's absence gives cause for concern. They will share relevant information with the school's safeguarding team in line with school procedures.

All staff will promote regular attendance, record registers accurately and promptly, and pass on concerns about absence or a pupil's welfare.

Parents and carers should contact the school promptly about absence and work with staff to support their child's regular attendance.

4. Reporting and following up absence

Parents and carers should report an absence by **9.00am** on the first day, by calling **01724 842829** or emailing **parents@bushfieldinfants.co.uk**. Please give the pupil's full name, class, reason for absence and, if known, expected return date. Parents should keep the school updated if the absence continues.

If the school has not received a reason, it will contact the parent or carer on the first day of absence. If the absence remains unexplained, the school may make further contact, use emergency contact details and take safeguarding action where appropriate. Accurate contact details, including more than one emergency contact where possible, help the school respond promptly.

The school may contact parents to discuss an absence or ask for further information where it has a genuine concern about the reason given. Any decision about whether an absence is authorised is made by the school.

Welfare checks and attendance postcards

The school may arrange a welfare check at home, carried out by the Learning Mentor or a member of SLT, when a pupil's absence or lack of contact gives cause for concern. The timing and nature of a check will depend on the individual circumstances and any safeguarding concerns; the school will not wait 48 hours where earlier action is needed.

Where a pupil has been absent for **more than 48 hours**, the school may leave an attendance postcard at the parent's or carer's home when carrying out a welfare check. The postcard will be a discreet prompt to contact school about the absence. It will not include sensitive personal information. A postcard does not replace direct contact or any safeguarding action required.

5. Lateness

Punctuality matters: arriving late can mean missing learning and can make it harder for a pupil to settle into the school day.

Pupils arriving after 9.00am must report to the school office with their parent or carer and give a reason for lateness. The school will monitor repeated lateness and speak with families to understand any barriers and agree support. Persistent lateness may affect a pupil's attendance record and may lead to further action in line with this policy and statutory guidance.

6. Promoting and celebrating attendance

We promote attendance through a welcoming school culture, positive relationships with families and clear communication about the importance of being in school.

Our celebrations and displays include:

- **A weekly attendance trophy** for the class with the highest attendance that week.
- **A weekly spin-the-wheel celebration:** a pupil who has attended every day that week can have a turn to win a sparkly pencil.
- **Traffic-light attendance trackers** displayed on classroom doors.
- The **winning class attendance displayed in the school office**.

These activities recognise attendance and help pupils understand that being in school matters. They are not a substitute for finding out why a pupil is absent and offering support. No pupil should be shamed or disadvantaged in school because of absence, including absence related to illness, disability or other individual circumstances. The school will consider pupils' individual needs and apply its approach fairly.

7. Responding to attendance concerns

The school checks attendance regularly and looks for changes or emerging patterns, including repeated absence on particular days or around particular events. We aim to act early rather than wait until absence has become severe.

When attendance is a concern, the school will seek to understand what is making attendance difficult and agree proportionate support with the family. This may include:

- A conversation or meeting with the parent or carer.
- An agreed plan with clear actions and a review date.
- Support from the Learning Mentor, SENCO or other relevant school staff.
- A welfare check or referral to appropriate services, where needed.
- A supported return to school after a longer period of absence, including help to rebuild confidence and reconnect with learning.

Where a pupil is persistently or severely absent, or at risk of becoming so, the school will consider whether wider support or a formal process with the local authority is needed. Formal action may be considered where support is not appropriate, is unsuccessful or is not engaged with.

8. Absence and leave during term time

Parents should arrange medical or dental appointments outside the school day wherever possible. If an appointment during school time is unavoidable, the pupil should miss the shortest possible time. Parents should notify the school in advance where possible and may be asked for appointment evidence.

Leave during term time is not an entitlement. The Headteacher may grant leave only where the relevant legal test is met and the circumstances are considered exceptional. Requests must be made in advance and in writing. The school will consider each request individually and respond in writing. A holiday in term time will not be authorised. Retrospective requests will not be authorised.

9. Attendance records and safeguarding

The school will keep attendance and admission registers in accordance with the applicable regulations and statutory guidance. Staff must record attendance accurately and promptly, and update absence codes when the reason becomes known.

Unexplained absence may raise a safeguarding concern. Staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedures and share concerns promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where appropriate, the school will contact other professionals or make referrals through

established safeguarding routes. Case-specific safeguarding concerns must not be left to routine attendance follow-up.

The school will maintain records of attendance concerns, contact with families, agreed support and decisions made. Records should be clear enough to show what action was taken and the reason for it.

10. Legal intervention

The school will work with families and the local authority to improve attendance and address barriers. Where required, support may be formalised and the school may request or support legal intervention in line with current statutory guidance and local authority procedures. This may include a Notice to Improve, a penalty notice or other legal measures where the relevant conditions are met.

The school will explain concerns, support offered and possible next steps to parents and carers. Legal action is not a substitute for safeguarding action or appropriate support.

11. Monitoring and review

SLT and the Learning mentor will review attendance information regularly to identify pupils and groups who may need support. The Headteacher will report attendance and actions taken to the governing board in line with the school's monitoring arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if statutory guidance or local procedures change. It will be made available to staff and families.