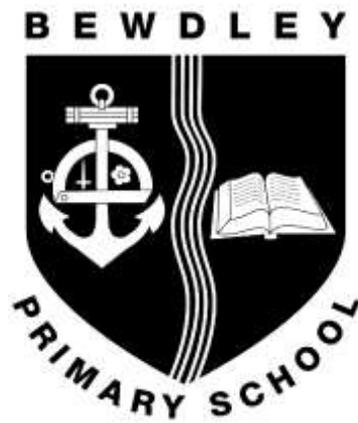


Reviewed March 2021
Next Review March 2022

Bewdley Primary School



Attendance Policy

Bewdley Primary School
Helping everyone achieve their best
Attendance Policy

The aim of this policy is to promote regular attendance and punctuality in support of helping all children achieve their best in school

It provides a framework to be shared with governors, all staff, parents, carers and children so that all with responsibility for children's attendance and punctuality are aware of their responsibilities. It also identifies the steps to be taken where there is a need to improve attendance &/or punctuality.

Regular attendance and punctuality are key to helping children achieve their best in school. With regular attendance children have the opportunity to experience the full breadth of the curriculum and most importantly develop the routine and expectation of attending school.

Children who exhibit the greatest difficulty in attending regularly at high school are those with poor attendance records early in their primary school.

With punctuality children are able to understand the expectations of the day's activities, develop a sense of belonging to the group and are not disturbed in their preparations for learning.

Lateness causes upset and anxiety for the child arriving late in school and causes disruption to the other members of the class and the teacher who has prepared the lessons to start promptly.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present
- absent
- present at approved educational activity
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head Teacher and governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits as well as ensuring appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.

Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Absence

Reasons for absence

Children are allowed to be absent from school through ill-health, medical treatment, religious observance, education elsewhere, special circumstances approved by the headteacher. Absence for reasons other than those allowed is classified as an ***unauthorised absence*** and is recorded as such against the child's annual rate of attendance.

There is no authorisation given for **holidays** taken in school time unless deemed to be **in exceptional circumstances**. Common examples are where parents are members of the armed forces or emergency services where leave is fixed, or where written evidence can be produced from employers stating that holiday leave can only be granted in term time dates. Applications for leave of absence should be made on the form obtained from the school office – this needs to be done at least 3 weeks before the holiday is due to start and holidays should not be booked until authorisation is given. Every application will be considered on its own merits. A decision will be provided in writing. The criteria used is imposed by government legislation.

Notifying school of absence

Where a child is absent for one of the allowed reasons and this is known in advance parents should provide written notice of the absence prior to the start of the absence. This prior notice will be entered onto the electronic register.

Where an absence is not known in advance the parents have a responsibility to communicate the absence to the school on the first day of absence. **There is a dedicated option on the school answerphone to leave messages explaining the absence.** Office staff will enter the appropriate code for the absence on the child's record. If the illness/reason for absence is such that a longer period of time is needed parents should keep the school informed either by letter or phone calls. Parents may wish to send in a letter to the class teacher explaining an absence, on the child's return.

Where notice of absence is not received by 9.30am the school will contact the parents / other contacts by phone to enquire as to the reason for absence. All contacts will be phoned until a reason is established. If no reason is given the absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is important from a safeguarding point of view to ensure that contact is made. If we have safeguarding concerns and are unable to make contact, we may contact other agencies (e.g. police, Social Care) or carry out a home visit.

Monitoring Attendance

- Half termly meetings are held between the School Attendance Officer and the Headteacher to identify any persistent absentees or any pattern of absence or lateness which might give cause for concern.
- Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be informed of the school's concern and the pupil will be monitored. (Letter 1)
- If attendance falls below 85% parents will be issued with a second letter inviting them in for a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss ways of improving attendance and how the school may best support the child. (Letter 2)
- If parents persistently fail to inform the school of the reason for their child's absence they will be sent a letter informing them that all future absences will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided. (Letter 3)
- If there are more than five days unauthorised absences eg by taking an unauthorised holiday, and the pupil has attendance of below 90% the Education Investigation Service will be informed and both parents may be issued with penalty notices. Parents will be warned of this (Letter 4)
- In extreme cases where persistent absence is recorded and the school cannot offer any more support, the case will be referred to the Education Investigation Service and proceedings to prosecute will commence.
- The school may refer to Social Care when a child's attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve

Punctuality

Punctuality is important in providing an effective start to the day and developing children's responsibility for their learning. It is a key responsibility of parents to ensure their child is ready for school at the start of the day.

Improving Punctuality

Where children are late once or twice a week for a number of weeks the School Attendance Officer will issue a letter expressing concern at the lateness. Where there is a **persistent pattern of lateness the parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the head teacher.**

All lateness after registration has closed i.e. after **9.15am** must have a reason for lateness in the school late book. **This late arrival will be classed as an absence.** Where a pattern of *lateness after registration closes* persists the head teacher will refuse to accept the reason and the lateness will be recorded as **unauthorised absence**, in accordance with national instructions.

The key times for Punctuality are:

- Children can come into their classroom from 8:35 am
- The register is taken in school promptly at 8.45. Any child arriving at school after this time is recorded as having arrived '*late*'. .
- Children arriving late to school must enter through the main school reception (School gate will be locked) and give a reason for the lateness to the office staff.
- A member of the office staff will accompany children to their classroom

Recording of Absences and Lateness

This is recorded on the electronic SIMS system. Codes and comments can be entered by the class teacher or the Office staff. The most common codes are:

- I – illness
- M – medical/dental appointment
- C – other authorised circumstance e.g. funeral, family crisis
- L – late before registration closes (number of minutes late can be noted)
- U – late after registration closes i.e. after 9.15

A print out of each class register is made at 9.15 each day and kept in the office in case of a Fire Drill or other emergency evacuation of the school.

Print outs of individual pupil registration certificates can be produced at any time to aid monitoring and are issued with end of year reports to parents.

Promoting Good Attendance

100% attendance for each term is rewarded with a certificate and a small prize.
100% attendance for the whole school year is rewarded with a certificate and a gift voucher.