

Bushey Heath Primary School

Attendance Policy

Initial Statement

At Bushey Heath Primary School, we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

We promote the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children. We believe that the whole school community takes responsibility for attendance- children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Regular attendance at school is a key component of the education of the children; the school can only achieve these aims if it works closely with all stakeholders to ensure good attendance.

The purpose of our School Attendance Policy is to promote regular school attendance and contribute to learning, achievement and the education of the whole child.

Aims of the Attendance Policy are to:

- Set out the requirements and expectations for school attendance
- Improve the quality of school life
- Create and maintain a culture in which good attendance is valued
- Be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- Value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

The Benefits of the Attendance Policy are as follows:

- To provide clear guidance to staff, pupils and parents ensures that everyone involved in school is aware of the procedures
- To demonstrate that clear procedures contribute to the smooth running of the school
- To show that the school cares that pupils attend
- To support improved learning and achievement

Expectations:

- The responsibility for good attendance is shared between staff, governors, parents and pupils. The Headteacher will maintain overall responsibility for attendance. The following states the expectations from each group:

School:

- Bushey Heath Primary School will provide a safe learning environment.
- The school will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis
- The school will reward excellent attendance
- The school will encourage good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absence
- School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality
- School will keep parents informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record
- School will work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern
- Bushey Heath Primary School will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality
- The school provide support to help reintegrate children that have been absent for an extended period

Parents:

- Parents must ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance
- Parents will inform the school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school

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- Parents will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary during absence period
- Parents will avoid arranging family holidays during term time
- Parents will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details

Pupils:

- Pupils must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to the relevant person
- Pupils are expected to be ready to learn.
- Pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually
- Pupils must not leave the school without permission

Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office by phone or in person before 9.00 am if their child is absent from school. On the child's return to school, the parent should follow the absence up with a letter addressed to the class teacher.

Authorised Absence From School:

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school. This notification will be accepted from the child's parent/guardian or other appropriate adult.
- Planned absence (e.g. hospital appointments) notification must be in writing (letter or email) in advance of the absence.
- Unplanned absence; initial notification on the first day of absence is required and can be by telephone and should be before 9.00am. Once the child returns to school, notification for the absence needs to be confirmed by letter or email explaining the reason for the absence.
- If the notification is by letter it should be given in the first instance to the class teacher.
- The reason for the absence is recorded in the register by a member of the office staff.
- Children should be free from vomiting or diarrhoea for at least 48 hours before they return to school
- Absences are authorised by the Headteacher.
- Bushey Heath Primary School may authorise absences for:
 - Illness
 - Medical/dental appointments (though these should be made, whenever possible, outside school hours)
 - Music or dance exams
 - Year 6 visits/interviews for prospective secondary schools
 - Death/funeral of a close relative of the child
 - Exclusions
 - Sporting fixtures where the pupil is participating
 - The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupils parents belong

Following up Absence:

- We require to be notified by the parent/carer on the first day of absence and then on each day if the absence continues for a longer period of time.
- If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence by 10am on the first day of absence, a parent of the pupil will be contacted.
- If no reason has been provided for a pupil's absence after 3 consecutive days, sooner if we think it is necessary, and the pupil has not returned, a letter will be sent.
- We will inform the Attendance Improvement Officer once the duration of absence has exceeded 1 week. This will be sooner if deemed necessary.
- On the child's return to school, if there is no explanation provided for the absence a letter requesting this will be sent to the pupil's parents. There will be a written request for a reason for the absence. If no reasons are forthcoming, the absence will be recorded on the register and attendance system as "unauthorised". Attendance percentages will be reviewed half termly by the Headteacher.
- Parents whose children have more than 15% absence in a half term will be contacted by the Headteacher who will work with the parents to bring about an improvement in attendance.

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- If there is prolonged or regular absence, there will be letters sent home to parents/carers in the first instance. If appropriate there will be meetings with parents in school and the involvement of the Attendance Improvement Officer.

Doors open and registers:

- With the exception of Breakfast Club (which starts at 7.45 am), classroom doors are opened at 8.45 a.m. and children can enter class from this time ready to be registered at 8:55am.
- Pupils should not be left at school before 8.45am as there is no supervision on the playground.
- Late arriving children must use the front entrance of the school and report to the office.
- Children arriving after 9.00 am will be considered late and their names entered as late into the class register. These entries are monitored as by the School's Attendance Improvement Officer.
- However, the pupil will be noted as present in the school from the "Late" book kept by the school office and used in the event of a fire.
- Registers will be marked in accordance with DfE guidance. (See Absence and Attendance Codes January 2009.)
- A late arrival after 8:55am gets transferred to the registers by a member of the office staff.
- In the case of a fire or similar emergency, the late book is used in conjunction with the registers and Signing In/Out book.
- On rare occasions, if late arrivals are due to circumstances outside the pupil's control e.g. severe road accidents, road closures, snow, the registers will be kept open for a longer period. This decision will be taken by the Headteacher.
- If there is no valid reason for the late arrival then the session will be marked as 'unauthorised'.

Following up Lateness:

- The office staff will have responsibility for collating lists of pupils who arrive late regularly. The lists will be given to the Headteacher.
- Parents whose children are regularly late for school, will be contacted by the Headteacher who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality.

Punctuality is an important life skill which we encourage in our children. Arriving in a room where lessons have started is hard for a child as they do not know what is happening and this can be stressful.

Repeated lateness to school will be followed up by staff with a letter to the child's parents or carers to see if this can be resolved before the matter is referred to school's Attendance Improvement Officer.

Leaving and returning to School during School Day:

- A pupil's parent/carer must provide an appointment card or letter requesting that their child be allowed to leave school. This should be given to the class teacher or the school office.
- When pupils leave or return to school during the school day they must do so with an adult and through the school office so that office staff are aware and the "Signing In/Out" book may be completed.
- It is the responsibility of the office staff to ensure that the "Signing In/Out" book is checked in the event of a fire.

Term Time Holidays

The Local Authority takes the view that taking children on holiday during term time can be damaging to a child's educational progress for the following reasons:

- Children find it difficult to catch up on the learning that they have missed.
- In the long term this can have a negative impact on their confidence and progress.
- Children are given a very unhelpful message about the value of learning, being on time and being responsible. All are vital elements of coping successfully in the adult world.
- All members of the class suffer if children take term time holidays as teachers have to spend time helping those to catch up.

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- Parents are strongly advised not to take their children on holiday during term time.
- The school should be informed of all planned absence in advance.
- Due to changes contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, the Headteacher may no longer grant leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Any requests for exceptional absence must be in writing to the Headteacher in advance. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.
- Any absence not agreed as exceptional will be marked as unauthorised.

Penalty Notice

At Bushey Heath Primary School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in a term (including unauthorised holiday) the Headteacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of the receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the LA may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance. A maximum of two separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any 12 month period.

Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (A.I.O.)

- Bushey Heath Primary School works in partnership with the allocated A.I.O. to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school.
- The Headteacher meets the A.I.O. on an agreed schedule.
- Information to enable the A.I.O. to carry out an effective consultation visit and/or home visit will be provided by the Headteacher.
- The school will endeavour to ensure that any information which could assist the A.I.O. to keep safe is given to them.
- Bushey Heath Primary School works with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance.
- When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the A.I.O. the school will make a formal referral to Children, Schools and Families.

Publication of Information

- Parents, pupils, staff and governors are informed of whole school attendance issues and statistics on a regular basis via the school newsletter.
- Bushey Heath Primary School shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with parents, pupils and staff.
- A summary of the policy will be included in the School Brochure and Information for New Parents.
- Attendance is a standing item on the agenda of school Governor' meetings.
- Pupils will be informed about the importance of school attendance through assemblies, presentations by visiting professionals, statistics, and displays in the school.
- Administrative staff will be responsible for ensuring that data collected by DfE is accurate.

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