



Attendance Policy and Procedure

January 2019 – January 2021

Reviewed by: Senior Leadership Team

Coordinator: Headteacher

Date: January 2019

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1. Aims

Bowmansgreen Primary School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality, ensuring that all the stakeholders receive regular communication
- Reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence or poor punctuality
- Fulfilling its safeguarding duty to investigate any unexplained absences
- Keeping accurate, up-to-date records and having a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance
- Identifying and addressing the causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils
- Working with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

3. School procedures

By law, Bowmansgreen is required to keep an attendance register and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance registers are taken at the start of the school day and at the beginning of the afternoon. The registers are marked to show whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils can arrive from 8.35am each morning, when classrooms are open and staffed. Pupils must arrive by 8.45am and the register is taken at 8.50am.

4. Definitions

Good attendance at Bowmansgreen is being consistently above 96%.

Attendance statistics

Descriptor	Threshold Attendance	Whole Days Absence	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100%	0	0
Very Good	98%	4	20
Good	96%	7.5	37.5
Satisfactory	95%	9.5	47.5
Cause for concern	90%	19	95
Unsatisfactory	86%	27	135

Bowmansgreen defines '**absence**' as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Persistent absence:

- When a pupil misses 10% or more sessions (90% or less attendance)
- When a pupil misses 38 or more sessions in a school year

Persistent lateness:

- When a pupil is regularly late for school, after the close of the register

5. Absence - authorised and unauthorised

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, especially if a child has frequent or regular short absences from school. The school may request permission to contact the child's GP and evidence of medical appointments may be requested (e.g. appointment cards, pharmacy receipts, copies of prescriptions etc). If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 6.

One unauthorised session is a morning or afternoon absence. A day's absence counts as two unauthorised sessions.

6. Granting approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant any leave of absence during term time, for reasons other than illness or medical appointments, if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances,' for example:

- death of parent/carer or immediate family member of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school in advance.

Each application for term-time absence is considered individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Requests for exceptional circumstances, must be made in writing, in advance by completing the required form, which is available from the school office. The Headteacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

7. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed **will be marked as absent**, using the appropriate code.

8. Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason; ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary; identify whether the absence is authorised or not; and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If a pupil reaches **10** absence sessions (5 whole days), school will contact the parent or carer via letter to notify them of this threshold and ask that they work with school to prevent further absence for their child.

If a pupil reaches **15** absence sessions (7.5 whole days), school will contact the parent or carer via letter and invite them in to school to discuss their child's absence and ways that school and home can work together to improve their child's attendance. This may involve setting targets and clarifying expectations to avoid a serious attendance problem from developing.

If a pupil reaches **20** or more absence sessions, school will inform the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) and the parent or carer will be invited to a meeting to look at ways of immediately improving their child's attendance. The AIO may attend this meeting or carry out a home visit. A letter will also be sent to the parent explaining the implications of meeting this threshold. School may decide not to authorise any future absence until the % attendance significantly improves.

Once a pupil reaches **38** absence sessions in a school year, their absence is defined as persistent absence and this will remain the case for the rest of the year, even if their % attendance improves. At this point, school may not be able to authorise any further incidences of absence. Parents of persistently absent pupils may be issued with a Penalty Notice.

Parents will receive a letter from the school warning them that they are at risk of being in breach of regulations if poor patterns of attendance do not improve. This letter is normally sent when a child has been absent for between **8 -10 sessions without authorisation.**

If absence is unauthorised and the cumulative attendance **exceeds 15 sessions** across the current and/or previous term, a Penalty Notice may be issued and a fine of £60 per child, per parent may be imposed.

9. Reporting to parents

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance during the twice-yearly parent consultation meetings. A copy of the attendance record is made available including their child's current percentage attendance and absence, including unauthorised absences.

If a pupil's attendance becomes of concern at any point throughout the year (due to patterns of absence, the number of sessions missed or the falling overall percentage attendance), the class teacher or another member of staff will contact a parent to make them aware of the concerns, share with them a copy of their child's attendance record and discuss ways of improving their child's attendance with them. Letters will be sent to parents as set out in

10. Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must each pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

11. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Bowmansgreen, we constantly encourage and promote good attendance and it maintains a consistently high profile across the school.

Weekly celebration assemblies

Every Friday, the classes with the highest attendance in KS1 and KS2 are named in the celebration assembly and presented with the attendance cups.

Weekly school newsletter

The newsletter is used to remind parents about the importance of good attendance. It regularly features information and prompts about threshold attendance, why good attendance matters and the school's current % attendance.

The classes with the highest attendance in KS1 and KS2 for that week are named in the newsletter with their % attendance.

Staff promoting and reinforcing good attendance

Staff are the ambassadors for modelling and promoting good attendance with their classes. Excellent teaching and learning supports excellent attendance and this is acknowledged and celebrated.

Attendance rewards

Pupils who achieve 100% attendance for the school year, receive a personalised certificate and a special reward.

Attendance display and information

A prominent display informing the school community about attendance targets and current percentages and where individual classes and pupils with noteworthy attendance are recognised and acknowledged.

12. Roles and responsibilities

Responsibility for good attendance and punctuality is shared between all members of the school community:

12.1 Parents and carers should:

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time every day, in school uniform and ready to learn
- promote a positive attitude to learning by instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy and expectations
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school rules and values
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good learning and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with Bowmansgreen to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify the school office if their child is absent according to school policy and procedures
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- not book holidays during term time
- work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on their learning, punctuality or attendance

12.2 Pupils should:

- attend all of their lessons regularly and punctually;
- appreciate the importance of being ready to learn;
- remember to hand in any note giving reasons for absence to the relevant person at school

12.3 School staff and governors will:

- provide a safe and effective learning environment
- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the whole school
- have a clear, up to date attendance policy and procedures in place, which are consistently applied and clearly communicated to the school community
- be pro-active and consistent in addressing poor punctuality and absence, including persistent absence
- support parents in adhering to the policy and promptly respond to issues which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this will be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. Bowmansgreen recognises that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications and is aware of the reluctance of some parents to come into school
- actively encourage and reinforce the importance and benefits of regular and punctual attendance
- liaise with external agencies such as the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) and make referrals where necessary

13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

14. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safe to Learn policies.