


Policy:	Attendance Policy November 2022	
Status:	Statutory	
Review Date:	2 yearly November 2024	

Introduction

We expect all pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We will reward those pupils whose attendance is very good through half termly attendance certificates. We will make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Pupils who attend school on a regular basis can take advantage of the full array of educational opportunities available to them. Research shows that those pupils who have irregular attendance are at risk of not achieving their full potential and in extreme cases, may be drawn into anti- social or criminal behaviour.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the school has all current contact details and a home or mobile telephone number must be provided.

1. School Responsibility - THE LAW and School Attendance

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated each regulation applies to all schools in England.
- School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.
- The Head teacher and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance.
- Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents/carers in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.
- Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.
- It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

2 Registration

Registration at St Botolph's Primary School is as follows:

School gates and doors are open just after 8:35am for a staggered drop off. They are closed at 8:50am. Latecomers enter through the main Reception door and are signed in.

We call the register twice a day – once at the start of the morning session (8.50am) and once at the start of the afternoon session (1.00pm - FK/KS1 and 1:15pm - KS2).

The registers should be taken and returned to the box within a 10 minute window (8:50-9:00 am and 1:00-1:10 FS/KS1, 1:15-1:25 KS2)

Officially, in the morning, the registers are 'open' for a further 30 minutes (9:00-9:30). Children arriving within this time, but after their name is called, will be recorded as late (coded 'L') before registration closes.

Registers will 'close' after 30 minutes (9:30am). Children arriving after this time will be recorded as late after registration closes which is an unauthorised absence (coded 'U') unless there is an acceptable reason.

3 Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carers) as either

AUTHORISED or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably by Weduc or telephone before 9.00am.

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer or guardian. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent/carer sends a message via Weduc or telephones the school to explain the absence. *See appendix 1 for key to codes for authorised absences.

Parents/carers do not authorise any absences and only the school can decide to authorise absences.

The school will code an absence as authorised if the parent/carers provide medical evidence to justify their child's absence. School will expect parents/carers to provide medical evidence for any absences over 3 days.

The school may make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer or the Leicestershire Attendance Team if a pupil has an increasing number of authorised absences as this is classed as 'persistent absence'. Contact will have been made with the parent/carers regarding the absences and work will have been done trying to support parents before this point is reached.

Once referred to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer)/ Leicestershire Attendance Team, parents may be required to provide medical evidence for all absences even if it is a single day.

The school may also make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer if there is a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety. Parents/carers will be contacted to ascertain if further action needs to be taken.

Parents/carers are expected to co-operate with the school and attend any meeting when requested to do so by the school.

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the Head teacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

All absences are coded as unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent/carer. Examples of this are-

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Parent/carers keeping pupils off school because they themselves are ill
- Family holidays or leave of absence that has not been agreed

An absence will also be coded as unauthorised if a parent/carer fails to provide medical evidence when requested to do so.

*See appendix 1 for key to codes for unauthorised absences.

4 Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent/carer of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parent/carers will be asked to a meeting at the school to discuss the problem. We will work with the family in an effort to resolve any issues and provide support before taking the matter further.

If the pupil continues to accrue unauthorised absences the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer / Leicestershire Attendance Team, who will make contact with the parent/carers to seek to ensure that the parent/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

Where required, legal action will be sought and the EWO will submit the case before the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice and /or prosecution. The Education Act 1996 (Section 444) states:

'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent/carer is guilty of an offence'. The school reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parent/carers who repeatedly fail in their responsibility to send their children to school on a regular basis.

5 If a pupil is absent

Parent/carers should inform the school on the morning of the first day of absence either by telephone on 01509 503387 or via Weduc, clearly stating the reason for the absence and the expected duration of illness. Office staff record reported absences on a daily log that is accessible to teaching staff so they can see who is absent and why.

When a pupil is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which will inform the school office. If the office has not already been informed of the reason for a pupil's absence, they will then contact a parent/carer by telephone.

As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent/carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the pupil.

All registers should be downstairs by 9am and calls to parents to check absence must be made by 9:30am.

If a year 6 child walks to school alone and is absent, teachers will make sure the office is aware so their absence can be followed up straight away if no reason has been given.

When the pupil returns to school, parents/carers must ensure that a Weduc message or verbal confirmation is provided to explain the reason for the absence.

A Weduc message must be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a pupil has a medical appointment. Parents/carers are encouraged to provide the appointment card/letter.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a pupil, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent/carer, in order to check on the safety of the pupil.

Where the school has concerns about a pupil's safety the EWO will be contacted and a 'Safe and Well' check will be carried out.

6 Requests for leave of absence

Any time missed from school is detrimental to progress and has a negative impact on a child's achievement. At our school we view regular school attendance should be at **96%** and encourage all parent/carers to support us in ensuring that their child's attendance does not fall below this level.

The School and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child's education and development. It is for this reason that non attendances (however short or infrequent) are treated seriously. It remains the policy of the school to only sanction non-attendance during term time in exceptional circumstances.

We do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence for a child, e.g. a family crisis. We expect parents/carers to contact the school and request the leave of absence on the official school form. The Head teacher will respond to the request as soon as possible

7 Holidays in term time

Government guidelines, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, prevent Head teachers from granting **any** leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during term-time does **not** fall under the category of 'exceptional circumstances' and the school is therefore unable to grant leave of absence for any family holiday.

In order to request a family holiday for 'exceptional circumstances', Parents/carers must complete a 'leave of absence' form, outlining the reason and the specific dates when leave is required. The Head teacher and appropriate Governor committee will consider the request on a case by case basis, and inform the Parent/carers of their decision in writing.

Holidays taken without permission will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' – family holiday not agreed ('G' Code).

As required by law a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer when there are absences totalling 5 days or more in any one academic year, who will then pass the matter to the Local Authority.

8 Issuing a fine

The parent/carer(s) of any pupil who has absences recorded as a result of an unauthorised family holiday, can each be fined £60 which must be paid within a 21 day period. Failure to pay the fine(s) within this timescale, will result in the fines being doubled to £120, which will need to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued. If the fine(s) remain unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parents/carers may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, Parents/carers will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

Parent/carers can seek further clarification from our current Education Welfare Officer on 07947994289 or email naina.zavery@ews-m.com

9 Long-term absence

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. This work must be completed and returned to school so that the school can monitor the pupil's progress.

Where it is deemed that a pupil is unable to return to school due to chronic medical or other medical reasons the school will make a referral to our EWO to ascertain if any alternative provision for education can be requested. Parents/carers will have to provide medical evidence that clearly states a pupil is unable to return to mainstream education.

Parents/carers must provide the school with medical evidence when their child is going to be off from school for long periods but alternative provision is not being sought. The school may refer this for further investigations to our EWO who will make contact with the parent/carers.

10 Lateness and punctuality

School gates and doors are open from 8:40am. The school gate is locked from 8:50am and any pupils arriving after this time must enter school through the main entrance and be 'signed in' by a parent/carer.

Registers remain open between 9.00am-9:30am and pupils arriving during this time will be marked as 'Late' on the class register ('L' code)

Any pupil that arrives at school after the register has closed (9:30) will be coded with a 'U' code. This equates to an unauthorised mark. Parent/carers may be requested to meet with the school and then the EWO if this becomes a regular problem. Legal action can be taken when a child has 'U' codes as this is deemed to be an unauthorised mark.

Where possible parent/carers must ensure that they try and book all medical appointments either before school starts or after school finishes. It is useful for parent/carers to provide the school with the appointment card and/or letter for any medical appointment. All medical appointments will be coded as an M which does equate to an authorised absence.

Parent/carers of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the Head teacher and will be asked to address the problem. We will make our best efforts to work with families to make sure the situation improves. If not, school may make a referral to our EWO/ Leicestershire Attendance Team who will make contact with the parent/carers.

11 Rewards for good attendance

All the pupils who have excellent attendance in any half term will receive a certificate. There are also special certificates for outstanding attendance (100%) for the whole school year. These are presented in our achievement assembly at the end of each half term/year.

The class with the highest weekly attendance and best punctuality will be awarded a trophy in Friday's celebration assembly.

12 Attendance targets

The school sets its own attendance targets each year. These are set by the governors at a termly full governors meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Attendance data will be analysed half-termly to monitor the attendance of all children and to identify those children who are at risk of poor attendance. We will look at individual cases to see what barriers are preventing a child from good attendance and provide support or signposts to assist in the first instance.

Parents are provided with a formal registration certificate containing information about their child's attendance as part of their end of year report. Issues can also be raised during parent/teacher meetings. More urgent action can be taken where necessary.

13 Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The Head teacher will monitor attendance on a monthly basis to identify any pupils who are persistently absent or who continually arrive late. Parents/carers will be informed by letter and will be expected to address this, otherwise the Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be inspected by OFSTED who will make a judgement about the school's attendance in their inspection report.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a pupil's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular pupil, this will be reported to the Head teacher, who will contact the parent/carers.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Appendix 1

Key of Codes

Authorised Absence -

M = Medical/Dental appointments

I = Illness

C = Other authorised circumstances

T = Traveller absence

B = Educated off site (not Dual reg)

R = Religious observance

D = Dual Registration

H = Family holiday (agreed)

P = Approved sporting activity

V = Educational visit or trip

X = Non-compulsory school age or school related

Y = Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Unauthorised Absence -

O = Unauthorised absence

G = Family holliday (not agreed)

U = Late (after registers closed)

Appendix 2

Key routines carried out by office staff and teachers to ensure ALL absences are followed up

Absences

Teachers

- Registers to be collected and returned to the box by 9am in the morning and 1:10 (FS/KS1 and 1:25 KS2) in the afternoon.
- Check the daily log to see if an absence has already been reported.
- If a parent contacts you about an absence, send a reply to tell them they need to let the office know.
- Walk to school children
Make sure the office is aware straight away of any children who walk to school alone and have not turned up for school so calls can be made.

Absences

Office Staff

- Registers should have been returned to the box by 9am in the morning and 1:10 (FS/KS1 and 1:25 KS2) in the afternoon
- Weduc and phone messages are checked first thing and absences are recorded on the daily log which is shared with teachers
- Parents of 'Walk to school' children to be phoned as alerts are raised.
- Daily class registers (NOT DINNER REGISTERS) are checked by 9:30am and calls are made to parents of children absent for the first day and not reported (to check on the safety of the children).