

"Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow"



Bishops Down Primary School

www.bishopsdownprimary.org

Policy for Pupil Leave and Absence

Date Agreed: May 2017

Date for Review: May 2020

Reviewed and updated by Full Governing Body

“Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow”

Introduction

Bishops Down Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils. This can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all pupils. By attending school regularly and punctually children will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. The whole school community has a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and has important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.

We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open and where there are more than 10 sessions or 5 days unauthorized absence in a 50 day period, the school may request a Penalty Notice.

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The gates are open to the playground from 8.45am. The bell will be rung at 8.55am. The morning register will be called promptly at 9.00am and the afternoon register at 1.00 pm (Key Stage 1) 1.30pm (Key Stage 2).

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at 9.05 in the morning and 1.05 pm (Key Stage 1) 1.35 pm (Key Stage 2) in the afternoon. If your child arrives after 9.05am or 1.05pm/1.35pm he/she will be marked as absent. Pupils who arrive after 9.00 am should report to the school office. Excessive unauthorised “lates” will be referred to KCC Attendance Officer.

3. Does the School need letters explaining a child’s absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will contact you by mid-morning. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child’s safety as well as their regular school attendance.

Parents should regularly update the school to inform the school when their child is returning.

4. Who authorises an absence?

Every half day absence from school has to be recorded and classified with a code by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can make this decision and record it.

5. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

The law says that the only acceptable reasons for absence are;

- Leave granted by the school (exceptional circumstances)
- Illness or any unavoidable cause (relating to the child not the parent)
- Failure by the LA to provide transport
- Day of religious observance

6. What if I do have exceptional circumstances that require my child to be absent?

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to be absent for any reason other than holiday, you should apply by letter to the headteacher at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why your child needs to be off school. In cases of recurring absences you may be asked to produce a medical certificate/evidence.

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7. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for:

- Parents/carers keeping their child away from school unnecessarily
- No explanation given by the parent or the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Late arrival **after** the close of registration
- Shopping trips, weekend trips away, modelling/acting or birthday treats
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- The pupil is absent due to a parent or sibling being unwell

8. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

From September 2013 the Department for Education has removed the ability of the headteacher to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Family holidays should be taken during school holidays.

9. What will happen if my child is absent without authorisation?

If absence is not authorised the case will be referred to the EWO. If we are concerned about aspects of your child’s attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward. Bishops Down will consider every application for exceptional absence individually. It may be decided that a penalty notice is appropriate.

Holiday taken during term time will mean that the absence is unauthorised. This may result in a penalty notice.

10. What is a Penalty Notice?

A penalty notice will be issued when at least 10 sessions (5 school days) whether consecutive or not, are lost to unauthorised absence during any possible 100 school sessions or period of 50 days schooling.

A penalty notice will be issued to **each parent liable for the offence**. For example, if two siblings were absent at the same time for more than 10 sessions then four penalties would be issued. They can be issued by the police, local authority officers, head teachers and those authorised by them (deputy and assistant head).

There is no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a penalty notice for unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Where a penalty notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings. Failure to pay will result in prosecution (possibly a fine of up to £1000 and a criminal record).

11. Will the school authorise absence due to flexible schooling?

On 22 February 2013, the Government published revised advice on pupil leave and absence. The advice clarified the Government’s expectations on pupil attendance. As a result, schools should not mark a pupil as attending school unless the school is responsible for supervising the off-site education, and can ensure the safety and the welfare of the pupil off-site. Schools are ultimately responsible for the attainment of every child registered on their roll.

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Whilst being home educated, parents and carers are responsible for pupils, not schools. Where parents have entered in to flexi-schooling arrangements, schools may continue to offer those arrangements. Pupils will be marked absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education.

The school will only authorise absence if it cannot meet the educational needs of the pupil concerned or if the pupil is taking part in a regular enrichment activity that cannot be met as part of the National Curriculum in school. This would need to be documented by written evidence. It will also only be approved at the discretion of the headteacher.

Signed by _____
(Headteacher)

Dated _____

Signed by _____
(Governor)

Dated _____

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Appendix 1

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been arriving late at school. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code L):

«dates_of_lates_before»

Total lates before registration closed: «total_lates_before» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at ?? am and at ?? pm.

A pupil’s lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for your child.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

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Appendix 2

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has arrived after the register has been closed. Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was late (Code U):

«dates_of_lates_after»

Total lates after registration closed: «total_lates_after» half day sessions

At our school the register is taken at ?? am and is closed at ?? am for the morning session and taken again at ?? pm and closed at ?? pm for the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral for a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If «forename» continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

“Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow”

Appendix 3

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «forename» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «forename» was absent.

A pupil’s absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «forename»’s attendance. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

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Appendix 4

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re: «forename» «surname»

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child’s attendance at school has made no significant improvement. «forename»’s attendance at school is currently «percentage_attendance»% which means «he_she» has missed «total_authorized_absences» half day sessions for authorised absence and «total_unauthorised_absences» half day sessions for unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on your child’s education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in «forename»’s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness may require medical evidence (e.g. copy of a prescription, Doctors/Dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided when required, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for ?? at ?? It is important that you and «forename» attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by:

??

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me so that an alternative time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and «forename»’s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher
The School

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Appendix 5

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Re «forename» «surname»

At our school we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that «forename» has been absent from school for a total of «total_unauthorised_absences» unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

‘As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.’ A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

If further unauthorised absence occurs you will be contacted and invited in for a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

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Appendix 6

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

I have received your request to take «forename» out of school for a family holiday between ??date and ??date, a total of ??Number of school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher’s ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in “exceptional circumstances”.

The School’s Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take «forename» out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

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Appendix 7

«addressee»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

Request for leave during Term-Time For the attention of the parents of «forename» «surname»

You failed to apply in advance for permission for «forename» to be absent from school.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head Teacher’s ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in “exceptional circumstances”.

The School’s Attendance Policy confirms that:

- agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body
- each case will be judged on its merits
- my decision is final
- leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher