

"Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow"



Bishops Down Primary and Nursery School

www.bishopsdownprimary.org

Policy for Pupil Leave and Absence

Date Agreed: May 2020

Date for Review: April 2022

Reviewed and updated by: The Headteacher

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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 have 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.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at 9.05 in the morning and 1.05 pm in the afternoon. If your child arrives after 9.05am or 1.05pm 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 the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

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

The school reserves the right to liaise with siblings’ schools to determine the reason for absence in line with KCC guidelines.

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) are lost to unauthorised absence during any possible 100 school sessions or period of 50 days schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.

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

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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.

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 _____