



# Child Attendance Policy

**Last reviewed and approved: January 2024**

**Next review date: Spring 2028**

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Dfe attendance codes

**Amendments:**

New policy with steps for monitoring attendance included

## Aim

At Bedgrove Infant School we nurture every child to fulfil their whole potential. Regular attendance at school is the best way we can ensure the children have full access to our curriculum and therefore have every opportunity to fulfil their whole potential.

The purpose of this policy is to promote good attendance through:

- Explaining what is good attendance and why it matters
- Outlining the process we follow to ensure attendance is good
- Detailing the steps we take when a child's attendance is a cause for concern
- Explaining how we monitor attendance.

## Why Good Attendance Matters

- We want every child to attend school for all 190 school days per year. This is the best way children maintain relationships with peers, feel part of the school community and learn our progressive and sequential curriculum.
- We understand that there are times when children are too unwell to attend school. However, we encourage all parents to help us promote the school value of resilience and send their child into school on all days possible. If a parent is unsure whether their child is well enough to be in school, we would ask them to send their child to school and be safe in the knowledge that if their child presents as too unwell, we will contact them. (Unless a child has had sickness or diarrhoea, when they must remain off school for 48 hours after their last episode of this.)
- At Bedgrove Infant School we consider attendance of below 95% to be cause for concern and attendance of below 90% as persistent absenteeism.
- Below is a table which illustrates how much learning is lost with attendance of 95% or below:

Attendance	Weeks Missed	Days Missed	Hours of School Missed
95%	2 weeks	10 days	68 hours
90%	4 Weeks	20 days	136 hours
85%	6 Weeks	30 days	204 hours
80%	8 Weeks	40 days	272 hours

## Policy Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 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](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Child Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## Implementation

### The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence and punctuality data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance and punctuality of individual children
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### School Secretary responsible for Attendance

The School Secretary responsible for attendance:

- Monitors attendance and punctuality data across the school and at an individual child level
- Reports concerns about attendance and punctuality to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence and lateness.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance and punctuality issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### School Office Staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and punctuality and record it on the school system.

## Recording Attendance

### Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all children onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every child is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

*See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.*

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

## **Children must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.**

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 8.50am.

The register for the second session will be taken at the following times for each year group:

Foundation 1: 12.30pm, closing at 12.35pm

Foundation 2: 12.45pm, closing at 12.50pm

Year 1: 1.00pm, closing at 1.05pm

Year 2: 1.15pm, closing at 1.20pm

## **Unplanned Absence**

The child's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible. This can be done by emailing or ringing the school office.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the child's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **Planned Absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the child's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done by emailing or phoning the school office.

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

The child's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

## **Lateness and Punctuality**

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work and classes run early morning work for the first 10 minutes of the school day while registers are completed. If your child is late, they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information and cause disruption to the lesson for others.

Registration begins at 8:40 am and all children are expected to be in school by 8.50am.

A child who arrives after the register has been taken in class will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A child who arrives after the register has closed, at 8.50, will be marked as absent for the morning session.

If a child arrives late to school, they must be signed into the main school office with the reasons for their lateness recorded clearly. The Office Staff will inform the School Secretary responsible for attendance who will monitor lateness and punctuality of children and contact parents as required to agree steps to ensure the child attends school on time as often as possible. Parents, guardians or carers of children who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good timekeeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected child to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies, if deemed necessary. If no alternative is available, the school will place a child into the after school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

## **Following Up Absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting the parents via telephone each day.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

## First Day of Absence

If your child is absent you must:

Contact us before 8.50am on the first day of absence by telephone or email with an explanation of the absence. If you do not make contact with the school office and your child is absent, we will endeavour to contact you. If we have not made contact by 10.30am, a School Secretary responsible for attendance will visit your home address. If we cannot make contact with you in person at this time, we will consider this a safeguarding risk and will contact the police.

## Third Day Absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence, the school is required to start 'Child Missing in Education procedures'. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and wider family. In circumstances of persistent absence, the Family Support Worker or School Secretary responsible for attendance may visit the family home to try to establish contact.

## Ten Days' Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any child who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number.

## Persistent Absence

If your child misses 10% (3 weeks / 30 sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Where this absence is authorised, school will meet with parents / carers in order to ascertain any underlying medical reasons for the level of absence. The school may decide not to authorise any future absences without medical evidence.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 96%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly.

Children at Bedgrove Infant School are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school and, whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

## Reporting to Parents

Attendance is reported to parents as part of the end of school summer report. Attendance will also be discussed at parent evenings.

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

### Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to children during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- If a parent is Service Personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when the Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term

time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is an exceptional circumstance.

- Traveller children travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the child is attending educational provision

Examples of where absence will **not be authorised** include:

- Family holiday (including where it is cheaper to book during term time)
- Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park
- A birthday treat
- Oversleeping due to a late or bad night
- Looking after other children/other family members.

A penalty notice will be considered for absences due to unauthorised holidays. The school follow Buckinghamshire County's procedures for reporting unauthorised absences and irregular attendance.

## **Reducing Persistent Absence**

A child will be described as a persistent absentee if they have attendance of 90% or below. This equates to 95 hours or more of missed schooling over the course of an academic year. This attendance figure is reported nationally and picked up through the local census information.

In order to promote high attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism, the school follows Buckinghamshire Council's attendance systems and procedures.

Attendance will be regularly monitored and children with low attendance will receive a letter informing parents their child's attendance will be closely monitored for the following three weeks. Where there is no improvement, the parents will be invited into school to complete a Parent Contract.

### What is a Parent Contract?

A parent contract is an agreement between the parent or carer, and the school. It is not intended to be a punishment, rather, it should be viewed as a way for the school and parents/carers to work together to improve their child's attendance, and an action plan for all to adhere to in order to improve the situation. This is a voluntary arrangement between the school and the parent or carer which provides an opportunity to put in support. If a parent or carer decides not to enter into a contract, they will need to try and find other ways of improving their child's attendance and will be asked how they intend to do this. In all instances, a refusal to sign a parenting contract or breach of parenting contract will be disclosed to the court.

If there is no marked improvement in the child's attendance after a review period has taken place, the school representative will refer this to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

If your child's absence starts to cause concern we will follow the steps outlined below.

### **Persistent Absence Concern Procedures**

#### **STEP 1**

At BIS we track every child's attendance.

Child's attendance drops below 90%

When attendance falls below 90% children are added to a monitoring list  
You will receive an Attendance Matters letter highlighting your child's attendance  
and our intention to monitor for half a term.

#### **STEP 2**

Child's attendance remains below 90%

You will receive a second letter highlighting your child's attendance and informing you that we will monitor for a further term. We will request a meeting with you in order to work together to improve your child's attendance.

#### **STEP 3**

Child's attendance remains below 90%

You will receive a third letter inviting you to a formal Parent Contract Meeting where we will set targets to support you and your child to improve their attendance.

#### **STEP 4**

Child's attendance remains below 90%

If attendance does not improve the school will contact the Local Authority Attendance Officer.  
The Local Authority have the power to prosecute parents for not ensuring that their children receive an appropriate education

## Legal Sanctions

The School or Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 child 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 or withdraw the notice.

## Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Bedgrove Infant School work hard to promote high attendance throughout the school. We do this by:

- Building respectful relationships with staff, children, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement.
- Ensuring there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Liaising closely with outside professionals to provide extra support when needed. (e.g. school nurse team, social workers, family resilience, young carers).
- Taking into consideration the vulnerability of some children and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively.
- Understanding the importance of school as a place of safety where children can enjoy trusted relationships with staff.
- Engaging extra in-school pastoral support or emotional literacy support if needed.
- Celebrating high attendance in classes and assemblies.
- Link high attendance clearly with school values.
- Design (intent) and implement a whole school curriculum, which engages child interest to encourage and ensure high attendance.

## Attendance Monitoring

The School Secretary responsible for attendance at our school monitors child absence on a weekly basis.

A child's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. The parent/carer is expected to contact the school by phone or email each day their child is ill and not able to attend school.

If a child's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the child to discuss the reasons for this.

If a child's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Child-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Bedgrove Infant School collects and stores attendance data and uses it for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual children
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

## Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents are asked to give the Office Staff comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing. If children leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be

a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

### **Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling**

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C (an authorised absence).

### **Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport**

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national or international event or competition. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

## **Impact**

Bedgrove Infant School recognises the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality and will continually evaluate the attendance trends within the school to ensure that children attain their potential and are fully prepared for the next stage of their education. It fully utilises its attendance strategy to evaluate attendance trends and to quickly react to any concerns.

## **Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum biannually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection Policy

Behaviour for Learning Policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Child is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Child is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Child arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Child is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Child is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Child has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Child is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Child is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Child is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Child has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Child has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Child has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a child will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Child is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Child is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 child is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Child from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Child is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Child is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for child's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Child arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Child of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or child is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Child not on admission register	Register set up but child has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day