



Beech Green Primary School

Respect Achieve Belong

Attendance and Punctuality

Contents

1. Aims
2. Strategies for promoting attendance
3. Legislation and guidance
4. School Procedures
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence
6. Attendance monitoring
7. Roles and responsibilities
8. Monitoring arrangements
9. Links with other policies
10. Appendix 1: Register Codes

1. Aims

Publication date: January 2024
Review date: January 2025

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and 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 We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At Beech Green, "regular attendance" means attending school every day (100%), on time.

2. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Beech Green Primary School, we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and, therefore, ensures the best life opportunities and chances for children. Because of this we:

- Ensure good attendance and punctuality is promoted and supported and remains high profile across the school.
- Encourage good attendance for all pupils, by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued and part of the school community.
- Promote a home / school partnership built on communication and trust.
- Strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all children.

We work with parents/carers to support regular attendance by communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, and by providing an Attendance Officer who is available to discuss any concerns.

3. Legislation and guidance

Legal Duty of Parents to Secure Regular School Attendance

The parent of any child of compulsory school age has a legal duty to secure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he or she is registered. Failure to secure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is a criminal offence which can lead to prosecution of the parent(s) in a magistrates' court. In Education Law, (Section 576 of Education Act 1996), 'parent' means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person.
- Any person who has care of a child or young person, i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child.

Statutory 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:

- The Education Act 1996

- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. School procedures

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of each school day and at afternoon registration. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes. Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school and be ready to learn by 8.45am on each school day. Morning registration is at 8:50am and remains open for 15 minutes. Afternoon registration is at 1:10pm parents/carers should understand that every absence will affect their child's percentage attendance, even those that are approved. The only exceptions are as listed in Appendix 1: Register Codes under the "Attendance Approved" column.

Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on every day of an unplanned absence (for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health) by 9.00am, or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). This can be done by calling 01452 722363 and choosing option 1 to leave a voicemail or using the reporting facility on the ParentMail app. Alternatively, you can hold to speak to office staff directly. Absence due to illness will be authorised with the appropriate code I, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. We acknowledge that, from time to time, a child may suffer from a mid to long term medical condition. On such occasions, a doctor's letter confirming the diagnosis would be required. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, medicine packaging, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If children have vomiting and/or diarrhoea, they must be kept home from school for 48 hours after the last episode to prevent the spread of infection; this is at the discretion of the Headteacher i.e. if the pupil is vulnerable or considered to be persistently or severely absent. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents/carers

straight away, to collect them. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, 0.

Medical or dental appointments

Routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence, with the appropriate code M. Advance notice should be given and evidence may need to be provided (for example, appointment letter/card/text, prescription, medicine packaging). The parent/carer will also be required to inform the school in advance the length of time the pupil is likely to be away from school and who will be collecting/returning the pupil. 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 5.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed (before 9.05am) will be marked as late, using code L. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (after 9.05am) will be marked as absent, using code U. Parents/carers of pupils frequently arriving late to school will be sent a warning email at the end of each long term. Persistent arrivals after the register has closed (9:05am) may result in a penalty notice request for unauthorised absence to the local Authority.

Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences in order to:

- ascertain the reason
- ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- identify whether the absence is approved or not
- identify the correct attendance code to use.

Parents/carers who have not informed the school by 9.05am of their child's absence will be contacted during the morning session by the school to ascertain the reason for absence. In the case of non-response, absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a call to any external agencies supporting the family and/or a welfare check by the police.

Reporting to parents/carers

Attendance is reported annually to all parents/carers in the pupil's end of year report. The Attendance Officer will monitor the attendance of all pupils and contact parents if their child's attendance falls below 90%. An Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) will be organised for the parents and carers of children who remain below 90%. Exceptions may include children with exceptional medical or emotional needs which the school is already aware of.

CME

Anyone concerned that a child is missing education (CME) can make a referral to Education Performance and Inclusion Team (EPI) at Gloucestershire County Council. CME refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity, e.g. school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education

provision for at least 4 weeks'. CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown) and are usually children who are registered on a school roll/alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either:

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected;
- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown.

It is the responsibility of the Education Performance and Inclusion Team, on behalf of the Local Authority, to:

- collate information on all reported cases of CME of statutory school age children in Gloucestershire maintained schools, academies, free schools, alternative provision academies and Alternative Provision Schools (APS).
- liaise with partner agencies and other local authorities and schools across Britain to track pupils who may be missing education
- ensure each child missing education is offered full-time education within 2 weeks of the date the local authority was informed.

If the Headteacher suspects that a child might be missing from education, a CME referral will be made to the Local Authority.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Granting approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments - as explained in sections 4.2 and 4.3
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. The school will authorise what they consider to be an appropriate period of absence due to religious observance, using the appropriate code, R.
- Traveller pupils 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 pupil is attending educational provision.

The following absence will not be authorised:

- Absence for Y2 and Y6 children during May when Statutory Key Stage Tests are completed;
- Absence during Phonics Screening Check week in June for all Y1 pupils and some Y2 pupils who did not meet the threshold in Year 1.

Term-time holidays

Parents/carers who wish to apply for a term-time absence must complete a Request for Leave form before travelling, available from the school office. This should be signed by both parents/carers where appropriate. Term-time absences are considered, by the Headteacher, on an individual case-by-case basis, considering the specific facts and context. The Headteacher will respond directly to inform whether it's been authorised (due to exceptional circumstances) or unauthorised.

Legal sanctions

The Education Regulations 2006 have been amended, and, as from 1st September 2013 no child may take holidays during term time, unless the Headteacher deems there to be exceptional circumstances. A penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority if unauthorised holiday reaches a minimum of 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) during term time, within the immediately preceding ten-week period. Any parent / carer taking a child on holiday that has not been deemed an exceptional circumstance may be expected to be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice. This could result in a fine to both parents/carers of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid between the 21st day and the 28th day. If the fine is not paid the Local Authority would then proceed to court for the criminal offence of non-school attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The school respectfully points out that parents and carers should take this notice as warning that: Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted. The decision on whether or not to request to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.

Penalty notices can be issued for:

- Unauthorised holidays
- Persistent lateness (U code, after 9am)
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justified reason.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer (a member of the admin team) monitors pupil absence on a weekly, termly and annual basis:

Weekly

The Attendance Officer produces a report of pupils with 90% or less. These pupils are classified as Persistent Absentees (PA), as they meet the absence threshold of 10%. The PA list is shared with the Headteacher who, in partnership with the Attendance Officer, consider the pupils, analyse the causes and, in the first instance, arrange an Attendance Support Conversation (ASC). If attendance percentages do not improve, an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) will be arranged. The pastoral support team use the attendance data to inform their support of the child and their family, liaising with the Attendance Officer where necessary.

Persistent absence means: At the end of term 1 = at least 7 sessions absence (3.5 days). At the end of term 2 = at least 14 sessions absence (7 days). At the end of term 3 = at least 20 sessions absence (10 days). At the end of term 4 = at least 25 sessions absence (12.5 days). At the end of term 5 = at least 31 sessions absence (15.5 days). At the end of term 6 = at least 38 sessions absence (19 days)

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors three times a year (ie autumn, spring and summer). Pupils' attendance data is collected, stored and analysed in SIMs and used internally to:

- track the attendance of individual pupils,
- identify particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and
- monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Board

- The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly (seasonal) basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy and ensures attendance data is reported as required to either the Local Authority or DfE as requested in a timely manner. The school's attendance governor also attends meetings with the Headteacher and the Attendance Officer to gain oversight of school's practice with respect to attendance.

Headteacher - acts as overall attendance champion

- Responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy, and reporting data to governors
- Deals with parental requests for leave in line with Gloucestershire Local Authority policies and procedures.
- Considers the use of Penalty Notices in line with Gloucestershire Local Authority policies and procedures.

Attendance Officer

- Monitors weekly attendance data for registration groups.
- Informs the HT promptly, of concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- Communicates concerns to HT/the pastoral support team
- Liaises with outside agencies such as the Education Inclusion Service (EIS), as necessary and attends training and network meetings to maintain up-to-date knowledge and use good practice
- Supports HT with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- Liaises with the Headteacher to organise Attendance Support Conversations for those pupils who are identified as priorities on the Persistent Absentee list (pupils whose attendance is less than 90%).
- Writes and shares individual Attendance Improvement Plans at Attendance Improvement Meetings (AIMs) for those pupils where an ASC has not improved attendance.
- Writes an Attendance Report each term (seasonal) to present to the Governing Body and liaises with the Attendance Governor on a regular basis.
- Sends an email, where appropriate, to parents/carers to celebrate where their child and family have worked hard to significantly improve attendance such that they come off the Persistent Absentee list.

Class teachers

- Complete the daily class attendance register with the pupils' twice a day; at 8:40am and at the start of the afternoon session.
- Provide a safe, welcoming environment, encourage attendance and promote the best performance.
- Establish effective communication links with parents/carers to work collaboratively to meet the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.
- Work with pupils/families of concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the Attendance Officer, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.

- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings

Office staff

- Receive calls from parents about absence and record it on the school information management system.
- Implement the daily completion of SIMS registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- Operate school absence line and records messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
 - Perform first day calls to parents and carers to remind of procedure, when no reason has been received for absent pupil.

Parents/carers

- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons e.g. PE kit, reading book bag and reading book.
- Telephone to inform the school on each day of absence of their child.
- 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 affect learning.

Local Authority

- Supports attendance improvement, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.
- Works with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensures that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Upholds and enforces the law in respect of attendance, child employment, involvement in entertainment and child protection.
- Supports the school in issuing penalty notices should this be appropriate.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

10. Appendix 1:

Publication date: January 2024
Review date: January 2025

Register Codes Code

- / Present am Pupil present at morning registration
- \ Present pm Pupil present at afternoon registration
- B Educated off site Pupil is at a supervised off-site education activity approved by the school
- C Other authorised absence Pupil has been granted leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
- D Dual registration Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also a registered
- E Excluded Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
- G Family holiday (not agreed) Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school (include holiday in excess of agreed period)
- H Family holiday (agreed) Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
- I Illness School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
- J Interview Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment (includes visits to other schools for transfer)
- L Late arrival Pupil arrives late before register has closed at 9.00am
- M Medical/dental apt Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
- N No reason yet provided Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (amended when reason emerges or replaced with code O if no reason provided after a reasonable time)
- O Unauthorised absence School is not satisfied with reason for pupils absence
- P Approved sporting activity Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity
- R Religious observance Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
- S Study leave Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
- T Traveller absence Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed
- U Arrival after registration Pupil arrived at school after register closed at 9.00am
- V Educational visit or trip Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved, by school
- W Work experience Pupil is on a work experience placement

Administrative Codes

- X Non compulsory school age absence Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
- Y 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 pupil is in custody
- Z Pupil not on admission register. Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
- # Planned school closure . Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day