

Birdlip Primary School

'Helping each other prepare for a bigger world'

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Adopted: November 2020
Last reviewed: April 2025 (Mr J Pugh)
Next Review: April 2026

UN Article 28 - All children and young people have a right to a Primary education, which should be free.

Birdlip Primary School is committed to providing all its pupils with a full-time Education, which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her full potential. We will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

Aims and objectives

1. To improve the overall percentage of attendance of pupils at school
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community
3. To develop a framework, which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
7. To ensure clarity of when absences will be authorised or not
8. To provide clear guidance on penalty notices

Introduction

This Policy sets out the responsibility of the school and all those associated with the School in respect of Attendance and Punctuality.

Principles

The Governors and staff recognise that the maximising of good attendance is a key task for the School, if pupils are to take full advantage of opportunities at the School.

The co-operation of all concerned, including parents/carers as well as school staff, is vital to ensure full attendance and good punctual timekeeping. By sustaining a culture in which full attendance and punctuality is the norm, the School will demonstrate to pupils, parents/carers and staff, the value placed by the School on

full attendance and punctuality and encourage children to gain the full benefit from their primary education. Emphasis on attendance and punctuality also demonstrates the School's concern for individual children by contacting parents/carers to enquire about any unexplained absence.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Head teachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused. Requests must be made on the School's official 'Absence Request Form', which is available from school, or can be downloaded from the School Website: https://birdlipprimary.co.uk/

As part of the measures introduced in the DfE Statutory Attendance Guidance on 19th August 2024, if a pupil has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences within 10 school weeks, the pupil's parent(s)/carer(s) may receive a 'Notice to Improve' notification sent via email on behalf of the school and issued by Gloucestershire County Council. Each day of absence is recorded as two sessions (morning and afternoon). Unauthorised absences include:

- unauthorised absence (where there is no reasonable circumstance for the absence taking place),
- arriving late after the register has closed,
- or a combination of these with holidays taken during term time

These 10 weeks can span different terms, academic years, and even different educational settings, such as transitions to secondary school or in-year school changes. For instance, if your child misses 3 days of school for a holiday in July (6 sessions) and is late after the register closes on 4 occasions (4 sessions) between September and October, you may be issued a 'Notice to Improve' notification.

The 'Notice to Improve' notification will set out the expectations and period notice for the improvement of attendance such as 'no further unauthorised absences.' Should the expectations not be met in the improvement period, then a Penalty Notice may then be requested by the school and issued by the LA to each parent/carer responsible for the child.

Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice. In this instance, a 'Notice to Improve' notification will not be issued beforehand.

The penalty amount is increasing to £160 from September 2024 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period, the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.

Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of school, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21 days).

If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority (Gloucestershire County Council) may proceed the case to court. In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, who has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

Roles Responsibilities and Procedures

Governing Body

It will be the responsibility of the Governors to oversee and monitor the working of the Attendance, analyse attendance data and follow up on attendance action plans (where appropriate)

Headteacher

It will be the responsibility of the Headteacher to:

- Initiate and monitor procedures for monitoring attendance/lateness.
- Ensure all unexplained absences are investigated on the day they occur, or as soon as possible after the absence.
- Monitor attendance and lateness on a regular basis and report to Governors on the progress.
- Not approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances.
- Keep staff and children informed of the progress of policy and practice

Class Teacher

It will be the responsibility of the Class Teacher to:

* Encourage attendance/punctuality by creating a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere.

* Keep daily registers and ensure that parents' letters/messages are passed onto the Office Staff as soon as possible.

School Office Staff

It is the responsibility of Office Staff to:

- Follow up all unexplained absence/lateness
- Inform the Headteacher of unexplained absence/lateness
- Enter attendance details onto the school SIMs system and produce reports as necessary

Parents/carers

It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to:

- Ensure full and punctual attendance at school when the child is fit to attend thereby instilling good attendance habits. At Birdlip Primary School we expect pupils to attend every day that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence
- Comply with the School's procedures for reporting absence/lateness
- Inform the school of reasons for non-attendance before 9.00am on the first day of absence either by letter or by telephone call
- If any child is to arrive late in school, parents should contact the school office as soon as possible (again before 9.00am).
- When the child does arrive late, the parent/carer must accompany the child to the School Office to sign their child in.

- Where a child appears to be having a high level of absence due to medical reasons, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence, will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the Education Welfare Service will be considered.
- If you are concerned about your child's attendance, then please contact the Headteacher, as soon as possible so that barriers to attendance can be understood, and appropriate support can be put in place to support you, your family, and your child to prevent further absences.

Pupils

- Children are expected to attend regularly and to be on time for registration and lessons
- Children are expected to arrive at school no later than 8.40am at which time the school bell rings for school to start on time at 8.45am
- Children should not arrive at school before 8.30am unless they are in Breakfast Club.
- Any child arriving after 8.50am must report to the School Office where the parent/carer will sign them in. This entry will be registered as a Late Arrival (or Late after the Close of Register if after 9.15am) unless prior permission has been sought and approved.

Education Inclusion Service

The school may refer a pupil to Education Inclusion Service where attendance remains a concern following school intervention. The Education Inclusion Service will work with schools and families to address attendance issues. However, if attendance fails to improve, legal action may be taken against parents/carers and could include a Penalty Notice, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution.

Procedures

It is accepted that on occasions it is not possible for a child to attend school, in which case:

- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to seek authorisation for the absence or to provide an explanation for the absence by way of a letter, a form available from school or its website, or telephone call to the School Office.
- If the School does not receive prior notification or subsequent explanation for the absence, then the School will contact the parents to ascertain the reason.
- Only the Headteacher or Senior Management Team (in the Head Teacher's absence) may give approval for absence.

- The parents/carers do not have the right to withdraw their children from school at any time.
- Parents should provide an explanation for absence as soon as possible, with parental contact being made with School before 9.00am on the first day of absence, providing further information by letter or telephone as necessary
- Any child arriving after 8.50am must enter school by the main entrance and report to the School Office
- Any child arriving after 8.50am must be accompanied by a parent/carer, who will sign their child in. This entry will be registered as a Late Arrival (or Late After the Close of Register if after 9.15am) or unless prior permission has been sought and approved.
- No child is to leave the school building unless they have been signed out by parents via the school office.

Evaluation and Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually, and will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.