

*'Live Fully, Laugh Often, Learn Deeply,
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 (see appendix A).

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.

Time off for a family holiday is not a legal right, although schools have the discretion to allow up to 10 days leave of absence within a school year. Applications for a leave of absence for holiday must be made in advance in accordance with school procedures. If a holiday is taken without prior permission from the school, or where the request for leave was not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in legal action being taken against the parent/carer by the Local Authority.

Under the Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 (R12) deletions from the School Roll must be reported to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, by the school giving reasons for that pupil's removal prior to deletion. 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.

Attendance Targets

Each school has an annual attendance target set by governors. It is expected that the whole school community will work together to achieve this target. Attainment is strongly linked to attendance, and research has shown that if pupils are to achieve their full potential, they must attend school regularly.

Statement of Intent

At The Bishops' we value good attendance because of the potential effect absences can have on a child's progress. We aim for an attendance rate of at least 95%. We record and closely monitor the absences from school of all our pupils. We particularly track those children whose attendance falls below 90%. A level of attendance at 90% means:

- Over half a day a week absence
- 4 weeks off in the school year
- 90% attendance in KS2 means one and a half terms absence from age 7-11

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- 90% attendance throughout primary and secondary schools still means they will have missed a whole year of their education

Below 90% attendance, children are likely to underachieve.

Below 85% attendance, they rarely reach their potential and may seriously under perform in school.

Below 80%, children are unlikely to make progress.

We also believe in recognising and rewarding very good attendance.

Children achieving high attendance will be rewarded by a certificate at the end of each term.

We also celebrate high attending classes in the weekly newsletter.

Roles Responsibilities and Procedures School

- The school has a paper registration system
- The registers are open until 9.00am. Parents should bring any child arriving after that time to the front office where they will be signed in by the office staff
- If a child has to leave school during the school day, parents should sign them out (and if appropriate back in again) at the school office in the signing out/in book
- The school operates a 'first day calling' policy where we do phone parents if we have not heard from them, but this is obviously a last resort procedure to ensure a child is safe.
- Only the Headteacher (or senior member of staff in his absence) may authorise holiday leave in term time.
- If a child has been absent from school for a long period of time (for example as a result of illness), the school will meet parents and child to discuss a reintegration programme which may include part-time attendance (if appropriate) for a short period of time.
- The Bishops' procedures in the event of poor attendance
- Close monitoring of pupils whose attendance is below 90%
- Letter sent to parents when attendance falls below 90% in a half term
- If low attendance continues, parents invited to an attendance interview with the Headteacher
- For pupils with poor attendance, we will expect evidence if illness is given as a reason for absence

Absence - authorised or unauthorised?

The school may authorise absences for such reasons as:

- Illness
- Emergency medical/ dental appointments
- Family bereavement

The school will **not** authorise absence for reasons such as:

- Visiting relatives
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Day trips
- Looking after siblings
- Holidays (Only in exceptional circumstances)

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Regular and/or frequent absence will be investigated, and will only be authorised if the reason given is felt to be justified.

Absence for holidays

Parents do not have a right to take their child out of school for a holiday. If they plan to take their child out of school for a family holiday, they must request permission from the school. Each request will be considered on its individual merits. However, only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised. In most situations school will not agree leave during term time as this will disrupt their child's education.

Holiday leave will not be authorised if a child has less than 90% attendance - authorised or unauthorised - in the previous 12 weeks. If permission is not granted and the child is still taken out of school for a holiday, the Local Authority may issue a penalty notice. If permission is granted, this will only be on one occasion during the school year.

Penalty Notices

Parents are committing an offence if they fail to make sure that their child attends school regularly. A penalty notice of £100 (£50 if paid within 28 days) may be issued to each parent if their child is frequently absent from school. Failure to pay will lead to prosecution.

Parents/carers

- It is the parents'/ carers' responsibility to ensure their children's good attendance, to ensure their child arrives punctually at school and to avoid taking family holidays during term time
- If a child arrives after classes have gone in, parents/carers must bring them to the front office to ensure that they are safely in school
- If a child is absent parents/carers must contact the school on the first day of absence and give a reason
- This should be followed up with a letter on the day the child returns to school
- In cases of persistent absence it is expected that parents will work with the school and the Education Welfare Service (EWS) to resolve any attendance issues
- Parents intending to take their child out of school during term time for a holiday (for any amount of time) must complete a holiday absence request form (available from the school office).

• Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend regularly and be on time for registration and lessons
- Pupils may arrive in the playground any time after 8.50am (there is no supervision before this time) and before 9.00am when registration is taken
- Pupils arriving after 9.00am should be taken to the front office by their parents to make sure that they are safely in school
- Pupils who are absent from school will be marked as authorised if a reason for the absence is provided and accepted by the school. If that is not the case, the pupil's absence will be marked as unauthorised

Review date: January 2016