



Lincoln Bishop King CE Primary School

Dream big. Love God. Live well.

Attendance Policy

Policy accepted: 18.5.2023

Date of Next Review (2 years): May 2025

Attendance Champion – Headteacher. Mrs H Wheatley

Attendance Governor – Rev. Colin Wall.

Attendance Officer – Mrs L Henry.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. At Bishop King Primary School, we will endeavour to encourage our children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school.

1.2 There is a relationship between attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress.

1.3 Bishop King Primary School is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life.

1.4 **The Education Act 1996 states that:**

S.576: "Meaning of "parent".

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person— (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) who has care of him."

S.7: "Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable— (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

S.444: "Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

The DfE has published new guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#). It applies from September 2022 and will replace the existing [school attendance guidance](#). While it's non-statutory at the moment, the secretary of state has committed to this guidance becoming statutory in the future (though not before September 2023).

We have a Designated Senior leader who is our Attendance Champion, this is Mrs Wheatley and she will have the overall view and strategic management of attendance.

Attendance is a whole school issue and every member of staff will be raising the profile of attendance within their class, parent meetings and all areas of school life.

Our Attendance is analysed weekly and letters will be sent out to all parent/carers whose child's attendance has fallen below 95%, this is to inform and to hopefully address the issue. Should Attendance not improve following further warning letters, then the parent/carer may be asked to attend one of our 3 School Attendance Panels, that is held in school. We hope to meet with parent/carers to discuss any barriers their child may have to coming to school more regularly and we will always try to work with families.

We apply our policy fairly and consistently and always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families, who may have specific barriers to attendance. We consider the obligation of the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We submit our attendance data to the Governing Board for each of their meetings and meet with the Attendance Governor, Rev Colin Wall, who checks that we are addressing any cases of low attendance and that we are working towards the whole school improving attendance.

We also work very closely with other services and take advice from the Local Authority, Inclusions and Attendance Team, our allocated officer is Mrs Sharon Tossell.

If we have concerns regarding low attendance for a pupil who is anxious and finding coming to school challenging we will refer to a wide range of services, such as the Mental Health In Schools Team, (MHIST) or use the EBSA programme, where we can work with parent/carers and the child to move forward with the goal of being in school full time, being happy and achieving.

We now have the support of the Virtual School, who offer support for all of our children who have a social worker and find coming to school difficult, Parents/Carer would meet the people from these agencies at meetings held in school and we work as a team to find every way we can to get a child coming to school and be able to access their learning with their peers.

1.5 This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets.

1.6 There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, this is currently Rev Colin Wall, who has regular contact with Headteacher, Mrs Wheatley and the Attendance Officer, Mrs Henry, as part of the monitoring and review process. The Rev Wall is also part of our School Attendance Panel, held in school each term, to meet with parents/carers whose child has low attendance.

1.7 Mrs Wheatley and senior leadership team will ensure that the governing body's objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data, surfacing trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

1.8 School staff are responsible to ensure they promote the school's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

1.9 Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.

1.10 Pupils have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

1.11 The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school community of the following:

- How the school encourages and enables good attendance
- How the school monitors and reviews attendance
- How the school monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences. Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

ENCOURAGING AND ENABLING GOOD ATTENDANCE

2.1 The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

2.2 It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the school and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

2.3 All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

2.4 Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and at parent evenings. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept on file and are passed onto subsequent schools. If a child's attendance falls below 96% and we have concerns, then we will alert parent/carers of this and will monitor their child's attendance regularly until it increases or if needed, meet to discuss this.

2.5 In addition to this, we will send out a termly letter to all parent/carers stating their child's current status using the local authority's Traffic Light Letter.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE

3.1 The school will consider annually, in accordance with its support needs if they need to purchase the Lincolnshire County Council, Attendance and Inclusion support package and in doing so will access support and advice from this service and implement any recommendations. Included in this package is an Attendance Audit that is completed and assessed by the Attendance Governor for compliance.

3.2 The school will log conversations with parents about attendance, to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.

3.3 By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

3.4 To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the school may request additional information or evidence, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, or prescribed medication.)

3.5 The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Administrative Staff, who then allocate the appropriate code.

3.6 All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes the Administrative Staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

The Attendance officer at Bishop King Primary School monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

3.7 **ALL** parent/carers **must** contact the school office before 08:50 to inform the school exactly the nature of the illness, when it started and how long they expect their child to be absent from school. This helps the school to monitor any illness's that may be occurring within clusters, for example chicken pox, or norovirus etc. Messages can be left on the school answer machine, before 08:00 am and parent/carers are asked to speak clearly, leaving the name of their child, their child's class or teachers name and what the absence is for.

The school office or Mrs Henry, may telephone them back, if they need to clarify anything on the message.

3.8 If there is no contact from a parent/carer by 09:00 the school office team will contact the 1st number on the pupils contact list to enquire about their absence, should they not be able to make contact they will then contact the 2nd named person. A message will be left if possible, asking the parent/carer to call the school office to update the school on the absence.

3.9 All pupils who are allocated a Social Worker, will have their absence recorded within their CPOMS file and the allocated social worker will be informed, by telephone and email.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss visiting the child, in order to establish that, the child is not alone, or is too sick to attend school, and is safe.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise to 5 days and there has been no contact at all from parents/carers, then we will inform the local authority that this child is (CME,) a child missing from education. We will continue to attempt to contact the parent/carers until the child is safely located.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. This includes all absences, even those that may have been authorised for illness.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each fortnight and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.

We also:

- Track the attendance of every individual pupil
- 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.

PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS

4.1 At Bishop King Primary School, we monitor the lateness of pupils, as being punctual for school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that pupil's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time, where they are welcomed at their gate by staff from 8:40am and they can go straight to class, to attend the Early Bird session.

4.2 There is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them.

There is however, Breakfast Club, that is held in the Hall, and is open from 07.45am until 08.15am, where children can have breakfast and be supervised in play both indoors and outside if the weather permits. There is a daily charge of £2 per child, however there are concessions and these are allocated by Mrs Wheatley. Every child attending Breakfast Club, has to be brought to the Hall by an adult or appropriate person to be signed in. Children must not bring themselves unless by the agreement of Mrs Wheatley. Children who arrive after 08:15 may not be able to have breakfast but are able to attend Breakfast club up until 08:30. All children are taken to their classrooms for 08:40 to start Early Bird.

4.3 Attendance registers are open at 8.50 a.m. for all classes. The afternoon registers are open as follows:

- Foundation Stage: 1.00 pm
- KS1: 1.00 pm
- KS2: 1.30 pm

A pupil that arrives after this time but before the register closes will be marked as 'late' unless the school have previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school.

Registers will close thirty minutes after registration times.

Pupils arriving after their register is closed, will be marked as 'U' which is an unauthorised absence.

4.4 Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/ carers. If the concerns persist, the Attendance Officer, Mrs Henry, will write to the parents/carers about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration current attendance summary.

4.5 If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to the local authority and may request a Fixed Penalty Notice, (FPN) which can lead to a fine.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

5.1 It is a requirement for the Headteacher, or their delegated Attendance Officer to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Headteacher and is always in compliance with the school policy.

5.2 Wherever possible parents are expected to make routine appointments (eg medical, dental) outside of school time.

Any appointment that has to be taken in school time, the parent/carer must inform the school 48 hours before the appointment is due. This enables class teachers to be prepared and support the pupil with any work that may be missed.

5.3 Parents must not arrive at the school office, on the day of the appointment and ask to collect their child, without prior notice. The only exception to this would be an emergency appointment that the school has advised parent/carers to take.

All appointments in school time, must be supported with evidence of the appointment, such as a letter confirming the appointment from the hospital, or the appointment card from a GP practice, opticians or dental surgery.

5.4 Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given. Should a pupil have persistent unauthorised absences it may be that the school refuses to authorise any further absences, whatever the circumstances without seeing medical evidence.

5.5 The Attendance officer, may ask parent/carers to sign a GP consent form, in order to allow the school to request information regarding frequent illnesses.

5.6 Whilst we track the attendance of all pupils who fall below 95% and send out 1st letters informing parents of the figure and then a second letter if the attendance does not increase. We will after the second letter not authorise any illness unless the child has been seen by a medical professional and we have seen proof of this. An FPN warning letter will then be sent out if the attendance does not increase. There are children who are exempt from this, such as those with a chronic illness.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

6.1 The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

6.2 Headteachers shall **not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

6.3 Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

6.4 Headteachers can also determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

6.5 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance, and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice if the child is absent from school during that period. A generic letter to all parent/carers is sent out every 2 years and to each new pupil, that states the policy on term time absences and holidays.

6.6 All refused term time absence applications, are referred to the Lincolnshire County Council, Inclusion and Attendance Team and a Fixed Penalty Notice, will be requested from them by the school.

6.7 Lincolnshire County Council have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Code of Conduct.

6.8 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Lincolnshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

6.9 It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 per child if paid within 21 days).

For parents who are separated this may mean both parents if they both have the responsibility of ensuring their child is attending school.

WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

7.1 Across one school year:

- **Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance**
- **14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance**
- **20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance**
- **30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance**

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

8.1 Where a pupil has 5 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to the CME (Children Missing from Education) team at the local authority.

8.2 Reasonable steps expected to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home.
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered.
- Home visits.
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts.
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family. □ Contact with parent/carers employers.

All contacts will be recorded on the pupils file and if there are serious concerns, then a referral to the Police for a Safe and Well check will be requested.

Our support to Parents and Carers

9.1 Following the guidance from the Inclusion and Attendance team at the local authority, we use their process in working through the stages to support pupils whose attendance is of a concern, 90% and below. We will alert parent/carers when their child's attendance falls below 96% so that they can monitor this too.

9.2 If we see a pattern of absences or an increase in absence after an initial informal call to parents, then we may move through each stage in order to achieve a better outcome for that pupil.

9.3 We will do everything we can to support parents and carers getting their child into school, we can use a range of diverse and creative ways to do this and will always try to avoid having to take any formal or legal action. If a pupil's attendance does not improve and we feel we have exhausted all the services we have available to us, then we may have to issue an FPN (fixed penalty notice) warning letter.

9.4 Should a pupil's attendance still not improve, then we will consult with the Inclusion and Attendance team at the local authority and discuss the next stage which may be a fine. Ultimately it is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer to make sure their child is attending school.

9.5 At Bishop King, we encourage all of our pupils to be in school every day and to achieve their best. Each class keeps a weekly record of their attendance outside their classroom and the class with the best attendance each week, is announced in Collective Worship wins the Attendance Cup.

9.6 At the end of each full term, the winning class, over all, will have a further reward for their class, this may be a special disco, extra playtimes, pizza delivery, picnic, or some other reward to celebrate their whole class attendance.

9.7 For those pupils, who finish the academic year with 100% attendance, they are given a certificate and collectively enjoy an additional reward that is just for them.

9.8 We appreciate that it is not possible for all pupils to be able to achieve 100% attendance, when illness falls but we also celebrate those children who nearly make this target and try really hard to be in school as much as possible.

Reasons your child **may** be absent and for it to be authorised:

- Vomiting and sent home from school = 48 hours from the last incident of vomiting.
- Diarrhoea = 48 hours since the last incident of diarrhoea.
- High temperature that has not reduced, even after being given Paracetamol or Calpol. If this continues the child should be seen by a medical practitioner.

- A skin rash that has been identified as contagious, by a medical practitioner, or pharmacist, such as Hand Foot and Mouth, or Chicken pox.
- Impetigo type rash, the child needs to be seen by a doctor and medication given, GP advice on the return to school to be sought by the parent.
- Any notifiable disease, such as Mumps, German Measles or Measles.
- A heavy cold, with a constant runny nose and persistent cough and high temperature, that would make it difficult for the child to be able to concentrate in class; advise they return after 3 days with medication if needed.

Reasons your child may **not** be absent from school:

- It is their birthday, their sibling's birthday
- Shopping
- Parents having a day off
- Relatives visiting
- Bad weather
- Sibling is unwell
- Parent/carer is unwell
- They had a late night
- Parent/carer had a late night
- Parent/carer has no one to collect them at the end of the day
- They have a runny nose
- They have a tickly cough
- Head lice
- No transport
- Over slept
- It is PE/Swimming/science
- Their friend is off.

MEDICATION IN SCHOOL

10.1 We can give your child Calpol or other medication if you bring the bottle to school and sign our consent form. The Calpol must be in date and the lid secure.

We can also administer other prescribed medications as long as they are in the original bottle with the dispensing details on the label or the box they came with. We can only give the dose as prescribed and only administer medication from a UK doctor or pharmacy.

We require parent/carers signature for the consent of all medicines to be given

COLLECTING CHILDREN AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY

11.1 All children must be collected on the time they are given for their year group.

Parent/carers should be waiting at the designated school gate at the time given.

If on the rare occasion a parent/carer is going to be late, they are asked to call the school office, 01522 880094 and let staff know.

11.2 If any child is not collected on time and within 10 minutes there is no contact from a parent/ carer, the school office will start to make telephone calls to the emergency number on that pupils file. If there is no contact and the pupil is still waiting, after 20 minutes, the school may have to contact the local police, and report the pupil as abandoned. The police at that

point will become responsible for locating the parent/carers and whilst the school will continue to care for the pupil and assist the police, should the school office have to close, the pupil will be in the care of the Police until their parent/carer arrives. If the pupil that is not collected has a social worker, then they too will be contacted.

11.3 It is also essential that all telephone numbers are kept up to date with the school office, along with changes of address and the named persons with permission to collect a pupil, we will not allow any unnamed persons whose name is not on the pupils list, to take a pupil home without first speaking to the parent and ascertaining the new person's identity.

11.4 We do not allow any pupil to go home with an adult who may appear under the influence of any substance, illegal or prescribed should this impede the safety of our pupils. Anyone collecting a pupil should be 14 years of age or over.

11.5 Only year 6 pupils who have permission from Mrs Wheatley to walk home unaccompanied may do so, it is not a right to do this automatically and the school will consider the aptitude of the pupil, the route home, the distance and any risk factors that may put the pupil in danger. The permission to walk home alone in year 6, could be withdrawn at any time, and parent/carers expected to collect their child.

This could be if it is suspected there is not an adult at home on the child's arrival or that there has been a safeguarding concern with in the community.

Government documents to support this policy:

- Children missing Education - September 2016
- Elective home education - April 2019
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs - January 2013
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance - September 2022
- School attendance parental responsibility measures - January 2015
- Working together to improve school attendance - September 2022

Linked policies:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Equality Information and Objectives
- SEND policy