



**Bexton Primary School**

*"Together we can make a difference"*

# **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

**Date of review: Autumn 2021**

**New review date: Autumn 2024**



Cheshire Academies Trust  
*Inspiring hearts and minds*

# 1. Aims

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

- Fostering a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents/carers and pupils.
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- To provide support and guidance for parents/carers and pupils.

Every child of compulsory school age has the legal right to an efficient, full-time education that is suitable to their age, aptitude and any SEND they may have. Parents are legally required to make sure their child receives this education by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school.

The importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained at the Reception new intake induction meetings held in the summer term for children about to enter the Reception Class. This reiterates that parents/carers and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children particularly should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents/carers will be issued with a “Parent Handbook” when their children start school. A link to the Attendance and Punctuality Policy is included in this.

Each academic year, the school reminds parents/carers via the newsletter of the rules relating to requests for leave during term time, including details of the issuing of fixed penalty notices.

The Senior Leadership Team at Bexton will review attendance each half term and contact parents/carers if persistent attendance gives any cause for concern. At the end of the year, each child’s attendance and punctuality is reported to parents/carers on their child’s school report.

## 2. 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 \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) 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.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Local Governing Board

The local 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.

## 3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

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

## 3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer:

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

## 3.4 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.

## 3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system and highlight any concerns they may have regarding absence with the school attendance officer/headteacher.

# 4. Recording attendance

## 4.1 Attendance register

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

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

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

Bexton Primary School uses an electronic registration system (Inventory) and the register is completed in the morning at 8.50am (Juniors) and 9.00am (Infants) and in the afternoon at 1:15pm for all mainstream classes. Doors are opened ten minutes early to encourage a prompt start to the day.

Any pupil will receive a late mark after 8.50am (Juniors) and 9.00am (Infants) up to 9:15am. Any pupil arriving after 9:15am will be classified as late after the register has closed and pupils arriving after 10am will be classified as being absent on an unauthorised basis; parents/carers of pupils who show persistent lateness after the register has closed may be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

All pupils who are late must report to the office and sign in on the Inventory system.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

All parents/carers should contact Bexton Primary School **before 9:15 am** on each day that their child will be absent or late, either in person, email or by telephone. There is a dedicated answerphone on which messages can be left; these are entered on the computerised registration system with: Date, Child, Class, and Reason for Absence.

Failure to notify the school by 9:15 am will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

All information is used for class registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence, the admin assistant will attempt to contact the parent/carer.

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 pupil'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.

Parents/carers of pupils who show persistent unauthorised absence may be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority.

## 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments 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.

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

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the code (U)

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers have no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. The headteacher (or in her absence the deputy headteacher) will determine whether the exceptional circumstance ruling applies, if not the application will be declined.

Requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made in writing to the headteacher on the school's standard form (see appendix A). Parents/carers will be advised of the outcome of their request through return of a copy of the form with the request agreed or declined by the headteacher. A copy of this form will be retained in the school office in the school attendance file.

If the requested leave of absence is not authorised but taken by the parents/carers despite this, the school will mark the child as absent with a "G" code. The school may then follow the option of applying to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective

approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised

## 5.2 Fixed Penalty Notices

Schools must report to the Local Authority any child (of compulsory school age) who has had at least 10 sessions (5 full days) of unauthorised absence in an academic year. The school may report this as soon as an unauthorised leave of absence is taken, or through their half-termly reviews of pupil attendance.

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 pupil 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.

Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis. The following legal intervention options are available depending on the circumstances:

**Parenting contracts** – A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school (with the exception of independent schools and non-maintained special schools) or LA to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision.

**Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)** – ESOs give the LA a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parents to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education.

**Attendance prosecution** – Prosecution is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

**Parenting orders** – Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order.

**Fixed penalty notices** – Fixed penalty notices are served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

## 6. Monitoring Attendance

Bexton Primary School monitors pupil absence on a half termly basis.

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.

Pupil-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 local governing board.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or more often if felt necessary.

## Appendix 1: Exceptional Circumstance Form



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### REQUEST FOR LEAVE DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.

Regular attendance at school or alternative provision is a legal requirement and “The Education Act” 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child’s regular attendance at school. Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, and parents have no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time.

#### PUPIL DETAILS

Name: ..... Date of Birth: .....

Class Teacher: .....

Dates of Requested Absence .....

Total Number of Days Requested .....

**Please state precisely why this absence is to be taken during term time, bearing in mind the comments above.**

.....  
.....

Parent/Guardian Name: .....

Signature: .....

I understand that keeping my child off school for any longer than agreed by the school will result in Unauthorised Absence.

#### Head Teacher’s Response

Authorised / Declined .....( Head Teacher)

Date: .....

## Appendix 2: DFE Attendance Codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	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
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil 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 pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil 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	Pupil 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 pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day