

Bledlow Ridge School



Attendance and Absence Policy

Date agreed: January 2025

Review date: January 2027

Attendance / Holiday in Term Time Policy

At Bledlow Ridge School we have a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance, embedded in the school's ethos, vision and values.

As set out in 'Working together to Improve School Attendance' August 2024

The importance of school attendance:

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

It is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 42. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

At Bledlow Ridge School we recognise that improving and securing attendance can not be viewed in isolation it must closely be viewed alongside:

- Robust and engaging curriculum
- Well embedded behaviour approaches and practises
- Proactive and effective responses to bullying
- SEND provision and support
- Support for mental and emotional health and wellbeing

Why attendance matters:

1. If pupils are to achieve their potential, good attendance and punctuality are vital.
2. The link between attendance and achievement is well documented.
3. We want all our pupils to achieve the very best that they can, to develop the whole person and be the 'best they can be'

Punctuality:

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring that their child arrives at school punctually.

Parents and Carers

The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority

We have strong relationships with our parents and believe that it is vital that clear communication regarding pupils' attendance is prioritised. To help reduce persistent absence the school will aim to work in close partnership with parents. 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance August 2024' recognises that:

Good attendance starts with close and productive relationships with parents and pupils. Schools should treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In working in partnership with parents, schools should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works alongside and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent.

We have good relationships with our families and regularly communicate attendance concerns and seek to understand barriers. Attendance is tracked by the office and the Headteacher will always speak to parents regarding attendance concerns in the first instance before a letter is sent.

Discussions with parents regarding how wider support services can help improve attendance take place and the school will seek out support from outside agencies, e.g. Family Support Services, as required.

What Parents/Carers can do:

- Ensure pupils arrive on time each day, well equipped and in a fit state to learn. School starts at **8.30** a.m. for all pupils in Reception, KS1 and KS2.
- *[In exceptional circumstances start and finish times may need to be changed]*
- Registers close at **8.50am** at which point your child will be given an unauthorised absence mark if they are not in school and have not given a valid reason.
- If you are aware that your child will be absent from school – please phone the school office on 01494481253
- If a child must attend a medical or dental appointment during school hours, then appointment cards must be shared before the event.
- Inform the school if there is a problem that may affect your child's attendance e.g. bereavement.

The school's day to day processes for managing attendance

If absences are unexplained or not communicated a telephone call home will be made on the day of the absence and a reason for the absence sought. If contact is not made, a follow up call will be made to all contacts to establish a reason for the absence. If there is still no response by 11.30am, two members of staff will visit the pupils' home. If there is no one in the house, the school will call the attendance officer at Buckinghamshire for advice, alternatively, the school will call the police if advice cannot be sought from Buckinghamshire.

Examples of how days missed affects % attendance rating:

0 Days missed – 100% attendance
10 Days missed – 95% attendance
20 Days missed – 90% attendance
30 Days missed – 85% attendance

TERMINOLOGY

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

90% or less attendance
(equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight
across a full school year)

SEVERE ABSENCE

50% or less attendance
New terminology introduced in this
guidance

Responsibilities:

The Education Act 2004 states that all children of compulsory school age (five to sixteen) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents/Carers are legally responsible for making sure their child attends regularly.

Bledlow Ridge School welcomes the active support of parents/carers. The school seeks to develop an effective partnership between home and the school based on mutual understanding and trust.

The name and contact details of the school's Senior Attendance Champion is Natasha Harrison, Headteacher, office@bledlowridge.bucks.sch.uk

Safeguarding:

The school has a statutory responsibility to safeguard the welfare and safety of its pupils. Monitoring attendance and/or patterns of attendance is part of this safeguarding responsibility.

Parental Prosecution:

When attendance is below an acceptable level and no reasonable explanation has been given, parents will be referred to the Local Authority who will be in contact with parents regarding their child's attendance. This may result in a referral to Early Help/Family Support or a fine of up to £120 each time a referral is made.

Reasons for Absence

Authorised absence: is absence with permission from the Headteacher; this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health. Medical and dental appointments, where possible should be made for after school or during school holidays. The school understands that this isn't always possible, however, pupils should attend school prior to or following a medical/dental appointment and avoid a full day's absence. Only half a day will be authorised for these appointments.

Unauthorised absence: is absence without permission from the Headteacher, this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences e.g. term time holiday or a birthday celebration.

Holidays in Term Time: Under Department for Education guidelines, special leave can no longer be sanctioned by the Head Teacher. Leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays do not count as exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised.

Any unauthorised holidays taken during term time will be notified to the local authority and parents/carers may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice for each child concerned. Time out of school during term time will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances e.g. a bereavement – every case will be dealt with on a personal basis and will be dependent on the child's previous attendance record as well as the reason for absence.

A leave of absence request must be completed prior to the leave being taken. These are available on the school's website.

Leave of Absence and Exceptional circumstances

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations make clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Guidance Notes for Parents

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully. A leave of absence request must be completed prior to the leave being taken. These are available on the school's website. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.

2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.

4. Buckinghamshire Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, they should be in school during term time.

5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of the following factors which may help to reach a decision: -

- the exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
- time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
- the child's current attendance and punctuality rate and overall attendance pattern
- exceptional term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- whether the parent made the request in advance
- pupils due to take any statutory testing arrangements (KS2 SATS and Y1 Phonics) will not normally be granted leave of absence.
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN

- The impact that the absence will have on the child.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.

7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

8. Should the school decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This action may be subject to a Penalty Notice.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave **may** be granted during term time are as follows:

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- 2) Year six transition day (for pupils in year six).
- 3) Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six).

Registration and Lateness:

1. All registers are marked at the start of the school day and after lunchtime for all pupils.
2. Registers are marked electronically by the class teacher. The school office receives an electronic copy of the register once it has been completed.
3. If a pupil arrives at school late then the pupil (and accompanying parent) should come to the school office. The parent must sign their child in and provide a reason for the lateness.

Letters to/meetings with parents regarding lateness:

1. Staff in the school office will remind parents/pupils arriving late the importance of arriving at school on time.
2. Absence and lateness are monitored by the office and headteacher.
3. Where a pupil is persistently late then a letter is sent home to parents, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Persistently late means more than two occasions in any two consecutive weeks or more than four occasions in any four consecutive weeks.
4. If a pupil's parents have received a letter regarding lateness and punctuality has not improved the headteacher will arrange a meeting with the parent. At this meeting the school should stress the importance of punctuality and discuss with the parent's reasons for lateness to see if any support can be offered. After the meeting the child's punctuality should be monitored.

If the child's punctuality does not improve then the matter should be referred to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority who will contact the parents regarding this matter.

5. If a parent is unable to make the appointment set for the above meeting then another appointment should be offered. If a parent is still not able to attend this meeting, then the matter should be referred to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority who will contact the parents regarding this matter. Parents will be informed in writing that this will happen.
6. All letters to parents regarding punctuality should be copied to the child's file. Records of all meetings will be recorded on CURA.
7. Class teachers must share the responsibility for encouraging good punctuality among their class by discussing the impact of frequent lateness on a child's learning in class.
8. The Headteacher reserves the right to accelerate the process directly to a meeting or referral to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority should a pupil's punctuality or attendance not improve.

Absence:

1. Parents should inform the school office of the reason for their child's absence by the start of the school day on the first day of absence. Notification can be made by phone 01494481253 or email at office@bledlowridge.bucks.sch.uk
2. A child's attendance should be monitored carefully and if it falls below 95% or if the Office Staff notices a pattern of non-attendance; e.g. regular absence on a Monday the school will write to parents and inform them that their child's attendance has dropped below 95% and is a cause for concern. Parents will also be informed in this letter that their child's attendance is being closely monitored and further action will be taken if attendance continues to fall.
3. If the pupil's attendance does not improve then a meeting or phone call will be set up between the Headteacher and the pupil's parents. At this meeting the importance of good attendance should be stressed and the reasons for the absences discussed to see if any support can be offered. At this meeting parents will be asked to bring any evidence (e.g. medical letters) to explain the reasons for their child's poor attendance. Parents will also be informed at this meeting that any further absences will require evidence (e.g. Doctor's note, proof of prescription, letter of appointment/meeting) to support the reason for their child's absence. Without it the absences will be recorded as unauthorised. After the meeting the child's attendance will be monitored closely by the school. If the child's attendance does not improve then the matter may be referred to the School Attendance Officer at Buckinghamshire authority.

4. In serious cases of poor attendance (below 85%) the school may request the involvement of the Local Authority Attendance Officer. This may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued to parents. In more serious cases the Attendance Officer can consider sending parents to court.

5. All meetings with parents regarding attendance will be recorded and information regarding a child's absence will be shared with the class teacher and Headteacher.

The National framework for penalty notices states:

Attendance at school is essential for children's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development.

Penalty notices are issued to 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, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools (with the exception of independent schools) where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences.

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and will only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

In Buckinghamshire we expect schools and relevant partners to take a 'support first' approach to securing a pupil's regular attendance at school.

See [Code of conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school | Buckinghamshire Council](#)

How the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance and the school's strategy for using data to target attendance

1. The office ensures that all class teachers have a copy of their pupil's attendance record for parents evening. The office team must highlight any concerns (e.g. less than 95% attendance) as well as successes (e.g. 100% attendance). The class teacher must use these comments and any additional information during their discussion about attendance with the parents.

2. The office must ensure that a copy of pupils' attendance records and data is given to parents alongside the pupils' annual school report. The office team must highlight concerns and successes to the Headteacher who will comment on these on the school report.

3. Wrap around care is also offered by the school as another opportunity to encourage pupils not to be late to school. This service is run by an outside provider and is available to all pupils.

4. Certificates will be awarded to classes with the highest attendance at the end of each term.

5. The class with the overall highest attendance throughout the school year will receive a whole class reward.

Children collected late:

1. Parents should collect their child on time.

2. If a parent is late **due to an emergency** then the child should be brought by the class teacher to the school office at 3.10pm. They will be handed over to the member of staff responsible for late pupils as the school office attempts to contact the child's parents. The member of staff will record the child's name in the

late collection book. If the child has still not been collected by 3.30pm then the child will be handed over to the care of the Headteacher or the Deputy Head Teacher.

3. If a parent is more than 45 minutes late, has not left a message with the school and cannot be contacted then the Headteacher or Deputy Head Teacher should may consider contacting the Attendance Service for advice. If they are not available, then social services will be contacted and if they are not available then the police.

4. The child must not be allowed to leave school with anyone other than the parent or the adult the parent has nominated on his/her behalf.

5. If a parent is late to collect their child from an after school club then the procedure above should be followed. The after school club place will be cancelled if a parent collects late on 2 or more occasions.

6. If a parent is continually late collecting their child then a meeting will be arranged between the Headteacher and the parents.

Collecting children early from school:

(Illness, medical and dental appointments)

1. Permission for medical or dental appointments is given if the appointments cannot be made outside school hours or during school holidays. Parents must bring the appointment card when requesting a leave of absence. A copy is made and added to the child's records. If no appointment card or letter can be produced, this will count as an unauthorised absence.

2. Pupils will sign out their child for any appointments or if they have been collected early.

3. Pupils must not leave the site unless they are accompanied by a responsible adult and have been signed out.

Exceptional Circumstances:

1. Only truly exceptional circumstances are sanctioned through authorised absence; e.g. an older brother or sister's graduation/family bereavement and these will be recorded as compassionate leave. The Headteacher will sign off every leave of absence request to determine if the leave is authorised or unauthorised.

2. All requests for exceptional leave must be done by completing a 'Leave of absence' request prior to the date of leave. These are all seen by the Headteacher.

3. The school responds sensitively to requests for leave of absence to attend funerals or major life events.

4. Requests for family holidays will not be granted as exceptional leave.

5. We treat each case individually, however compassionate leave is typically given for a maximum of 2 days.

Days of Religious Observance:

Pupils may request leave of absence on days set apart by their religion for religious festivals. These absences must be notified in writing as soon as the week of the festival is known. A letter must be sent to the Headteacher requesting this absence.

Interviews:

When a pupil attends an interview or examination in connection with an application for a place at secondary school (The 11+), this absence will be recorded as authorised. Parents must notify the school of the date their child will be absent to take part in the said interview/exam.

Off-Site Activities:

These may be divided into two categories:

1. School directed (e.g. educational visits). School directed activities constitute authorised absences.
2. Activities particular to an individual pupil; e.g. music examination is authorised. It is reasonable to request evidence (e.g. a letter confirming the examination) in order to authorise this absence.

Excluded Pupils:

1. When a pupil has been temporarily excluded then the absence is regarded as authorised.
2. When a pupil has been permanently excluded, his or her absence should be treated as authorised whilst any review or appeal is in progress. At the end of the review or appeal process, if the exclusion is confirmed then the pupil must be taken off roll.

Parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss support that may be required.

Review and Monitoring:

The Governors will review and monitor this policy in agreement with our schedule or in response to changes in legislation.

This policy has been written with [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk) in mind.

Working together to improve attendance:

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Effective school attendance improvement and management

PREVENTION of poor attendance through good whole school attendance management

ALL PUPILS Developing good attendance patterns through effective whole school approach to attendance (including leadership, ethos and systems and processes)

PUPILS AT RISK OF POOR ATTENDANCE Using attendance and absence data rigorously to support pupils with increasing levels of absence, arriving at school late or taking leave in term time without permission before it becomes a regular pattern

EARLY INTERVENTION to reduce absence before it becomes habitual

PUPILS WITH POOR ATTENDANCE Intervening as early as possible and agreeing an action plan for pupils with high levels of absence and those demonstrating growing disengagement with school

TARGETED reengagement of persistent and severely absent pupils

PERSISTENTLY AND SEVERELY ABSENT PUPILS Put additional targeted support in place, where necessary working with partners, and agree a joint approach with local authorities for all severely absent pupils

COUNTY ATTENDANCE TEAM

REFERRAL FORM – Irregular School attendance

Please complete this form for any requests to the County Attendance Team for the issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised absence. Please complete a separate form for **each child**.

Referral for		
Full Legal name of Child:	Name of School:	Date of Referral:
Address: Postcode: Permanent or temporary address:	Date of Birth: School Year:	First Language: Is an interpreter required (please highlight): Yes No
	Gender:	
	Ethnicity:	
Penalty Notice Details		
Period of absence for which a penalty notice is requested :		
Reason for the penalty notice from section 4 of code of conduct: (please tick)		
Irregular school attendance; Being in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion		

Please enclose a copy of attendance register.

Full legal name and title of Parent/Carer details – Please provide details of those to be issued with penalty notices

Full Name of Parent/Carer 1:

Address:

Contact number:

Date of birth:

Relationship to child (eg. Mum, step-dad):

Does this person have Parental Responsibility? (Yes/No):

Full Name of Parent/Carer 2:

Address:

Contact number:

Date of birth:

Relationship to child (eg. Mum, step-dad):

Does this person have Parental Responsibility? (Yes/No):

Please note if child does not reside with a parent a penalty notice might not be issued

Please provide copies of the following documents:

1a letter

Parent Contract Meeting request

Parent Contract Meeting forms (including all reviews)

Please provide details of any other relevant information:

Approval by Senior Manager: In order to agree a referral from a School or Academy this form must be signed by a named Senior Manager. This will act as an agreement for the Penalty Notice to be issued

Name:	Position in School:
Signed:	Date:
For office use only:	
Date received:	Issue date:
Agreed to issue (Yes/No):	21 days:
Penalty Notice issued to/reference number:	28 days:
	Date paid:

LETTER ONE

Absences Matter and You Can Help

Dear Parent/Guardian of

Date

Bledlow Ridge School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and aspire to be the best they can be.

{pupil name's} attendance for the {yr} academic year is currently { %}. This is lower than the Government and Department for Education's expected attendance of 95%

Government departments track school attendance figures. It is considered that attendance of 90% or below is persistent absence which will be closely monitored by school staff.

There are things you can do to improve your child's attendance and avoid falling into the persistent absence category

- If your child is unwell and you are unsure whether to send them to school, contact the office on 01494 481253 or via the school's email at office@bledlowridge.bucks.sch.uk
- Avoid taking any holidays during term times.

- Keep up to date with what % attendance your child has so that you know if they are at risk of persistent absence (office staff will provide this for you.)
- Speak to school staff with any concerns.
- Talk to your child about the importance of them being in school and let them know how important you feel it is.

While I appreciate some days have been due to illness, The Government expects Schools and Local Authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, to ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence.

Children fall behind when they miss school. Whether they are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

Attendance links very closely to our ethos, we will continue to monitor {Pupil} attendance and appreciate your support in promoting his/her presence at school.

If you wish to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards

Mrs N Harrison

School Secretary

LETTER TWO

Attendance Concern Ltr 2 - Master

Re.: Attendance Concern Letter

I am writing to you because of your child's attendance has shown no improvement since my letter last term. <pupil name's> attendance percentage is <?%>.

<pupil name> has had <?> authorised and <?> unauthorised> sessions absent from school so far this year.

I appreciate that absence due to illness is unavoidable, but it is our duty to provide you with this information in order to promote improvement in rates of attendance. We would very much like to support you and your child so please contact me as soon as possible, if you would like to discuss any issues or barriers that your child has in attending school.

I enclose the following additional information on attendance that you may find useful:

- Your child's attendance information (registration certificate)

Attendance is measured by sessions which are equivalent to one half day. We use percentages to support pupils and help then gauge their attendance across the year. Guidelines also require the school to monitor punctuality. All guidance is found in our attendance policy accessible through our website. If a child's attendance at school is low, this can have a profound effect on their future.

If there is no improvement in sickness absence and your child reaches 10 sessions of absence through illness, then I will write to you again explaining that we may ask for medical evidence.

Please note the following legal changes are in force. Parents will receive a Penalty Notice if their child is marked as being:

- Absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days), which is unauthorised – these do not need to be consecutive.
- Persistently late (code U) for up to 10 sessions after the register has closed. Our registration closes at 8:50am.

Thank you for your support in your child's attendance. We trust that your child's attendance will be encouraged given this information.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. N Harrison

Headteacher

LETTER THREE

Re: Attendance meeting

Your child's attendance is below 90%. Please find enclosed their Registration Certificate.

We would very much like to support you and your child to discuss any issues or barriers that your child has in attending school. Please could you attend a meeting at school on (date) at (time) to discuss how we can improve the situation.

Persistent absenteeism is defined as student attendance below 90%. Falling into this attendance category has profound effects on a child's future; They will miss the equivalent of half a year off school across five years if this pattern continues.

Government and Local Authorities require schools to monitor pupil attendance and punctuality. All guidance is found in our attendance policy, found at www.bledlowridge.bucks.sch.uk

Please note the following legal procedures that have come into force. Parents will receive a Penalty Notice if their son/daughter is marked as being:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days), which is unauthorised – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions after the register has closed; our registration closes at 08:50

Thank you for your support regarding your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. N Harrison

Headteacher

Attendance Concern Ltr 4 – BCC Master

You were invited to attend a Support Meeting on [d a t e], since that meeting there has been no improvement in your child's attendance. If you feel your child is experiencing significant difficulties that we are not aware of; please contact me to discuss the matter further. Missing <%attendance>% of school equates to <X> missed lessons which will be having a considerable impact on their education. In the meantime, I will continue to monitor your child's attendance for a further three weeks, during which time I expect to see a significant improvement. Please familiarise yourself with the school Attendance Policy. Only a Head Teacher has the authority to authorise absence, further absences may not be authorised without supporting evidence that your child was unable to attend school with good reason.

The legislation under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school where the child is registered. Under section 444(1A) EA 1996, a parent commits a further offence where the circumstances in section 444(1) apply and the parent knows that the child fails to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause the child to attend. The penalty for failing to ensure attendance is a fine of up to £1000.

If you knowingly fail to send your child to school, you may be prosecuted for the more serious offence under Section 444(1A) the penalty for this offence is a fine up to level 4 on the standard scale and or imprisonment of up to three months.

This means that parents/carers may be subject to a Penalty Notice of £60.00, per parent/carer, per child, if paid within 21 days; rising to £120.00 per parent/carer, per child, if paid between 21 and 28 days, if their child is absent from school without a valid reason (i.e. the school does not approve the reason given for the absence). The Penalty Notice is issued **as a means of avoiding prosecution** and there is no right automatic right to appeal for a Penalty Notice.

Should your child's attendance remain irregular during this time I will have no choice but to refer the matter to the County Attendance Team who may consider issuing a penalty notice as an appropriate course of action.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. N Harrison