Attendance Policy and Procedures

Date adopted: September 2022

History of most recent policy reviews

Date (reviewed every 2 years)	Review	Who is Responsible?
October 2019	Updated to incorporate content from BCC Model Attendance Policy	Standards Committee
September 2022	Updated to reflect changes made to the BCC Model Policy	Education Committee
July 2024	Updated to reflect changes in legislation being introduced from 19th August 2024	Education Committee

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Key Contacts

- Mrs J Knight - Assistant Headteacher responsible for Pastoral and Safeguarding. The school's senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance.

- Mrs Stone and Mrs King - parents should contact on a day-to-day basis about attendance concerns (or parents can speak to their child's class teacher)

- For more detailed support on attendance, parents should contact one of the following members of staff:
    - Mrs Webb - Family Support Worker
    - Year 1 and 2 – Miss Huish
    - Year 3 and 4 – Miss Cassell
    - Year 5 and 6 - Mr Burns

- First Day calling arrangements:
    - If your child is absent from school due to illness you must telephone the school using the absence reporting line: **0117 903 0077 option 1**

    - All absences must be notified before 9.30am or they may not be authorised.

    - If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

    - Members of school staff may contact parents regarding a child's absence – this may include telephone calls, emails or home visits.

All members of staff can be contacted on 0117 903 0077 or via the school email - airballoonhillp@bristol-schools.uk Parents can also make an appointment at the school office or request that a member of staff contacts them.

Part 1 - Policy:

1. Introduction

It is the aim of Air Balloon Hill Primary School that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and is an integral part of our school'

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with them, their parents and partner organisations to remove barriers, by building strong and trusting relationships. Therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business.

The principals of a 'support first approach' are adopted and we seek to:

Support first approach	
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.

2. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled; acting early to address patterns of absence and creating a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents[1] must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Therefore, in the development of our policy we have considered our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It is vital that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Therefore, the school will encourage parents of Reception children who are not yet of compulsory school age, to send their children to every session that is available to them. If the child is unable to attend the school for any reason, the parent should inform the school of the reason on the first day of absence. If the school is concerned about a pupil's attendance for any reason, we will contact the parent to discuss the matter, in the first instance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory[2] school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

We want our pupils to go to school every day unless they are really not well enough to attend. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school", therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular.

We will do all we can to encourage our pupils to attend. We will also make available the best provision we can, for any pupil who needs additional support in school or who is prevented from attending school, due to a medical condition.

[1] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

[2] A child becomes of 'compulsory school age' on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday and ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of Year 11.

Please see DfE guidance documents 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - December 2015', 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs- January 2013' and Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) – or ask the school for printed copies.

We believe that one of the most important factors in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and a sense of belonging. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children, and to foster positive and mutually respectful relationships with parents.

By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the school community.
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Celebrate and reward good attendance and punctuality.

2.1 Effects of non-attendance

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Over the 7 years at Primary School this is equal to	
			Weeks	Terms
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	13 weeks	2 terms
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	26 ½ weeks	4 terms
80%	38 Days	7 ½ weeks	53 weeks	1 year and 2 terms

3. Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023 version, or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information).

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance 2024 Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2024

The DfE's guidance on the school census explains the persistent absence threshold.

5. Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'.

The school will ensure that data is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include: identifying the individual needs of pupils; working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance; and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

6. Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access fulltime provision.

The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

7. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- and the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include

- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,
- and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

Part 2 - What the Law Says and Our School Procedures:

1. Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

2. Contents of Attendance Register

The law makes it clear that schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil. Please refer to Working Together To Improve School Attendance for the code descriptors and also appendix 1 of this document. The school must record whether each pupil is:

- Attending
- Absent

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to safeguard children, improve attendance and is supported by the use of our electronic Management Information System to record attendance information. Our registers will be preserved for 6 years from the date after the last entry was made.

Attendance and absence codes

3. Attending the School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present (/ \) if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

The Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive by **8.40am** on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at **8.45am** and will be kept open until **9.15am**.

Our afternoon register is taken at **1pm (EYFS and KS1)** and **1.30pm (KS2)**.

Our register is kept open for 30 minutes.

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (**L**) – which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed (**after 9.15am**) they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. See DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024).

3.1. Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a child arrives late to school, they miss important events like assembly, teacher instructions and introductions. Children often also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Over the 7 years at Primary School this is equal to
5 mins	3 Days	4 weeks
10 mins	6 Days	8 weeks
15 mins	9 Days	12 weeks

4. Attending a place other than the school

Pupils are marked as attending a place other than the school if they are present for the assigned session. These codes include:

- Code **K** Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- Code **V**: Attending an educational visit or trip
- Code **P**: Participating in a sporting activity
- Code **W**: Attending work experience
- Code **B**: Attending any other approved education activity
- Code **D**: Dual registered at another setting

Our school retains responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. Our school must be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Our school should ensure that we have in place

arrangements whereby providers notify the school of any absence. Our school must record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will make arrangements for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider arranged by the school, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (any other approved educational activity). The school expects the alternative provider (AP) to notify us of any absences by individual pupils, to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary**.** Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, or more frequently if agreed with the alternative setting. Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the Alternative Provider (AP).

5. Absent – Leave of absence

A leave of absence means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence' which means the pupils absence is with permission granted by the school. These codes include:

- Code **C1**: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
- Code **M**: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- Code **J1**: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Code **S**: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- Code **X**: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- Code **C2**: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- Code **C**: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance

5.1. Medical / Dental Appointments

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day's schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it's an emergency appointment, and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

5.2. Part-time timetables - Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

5.3. Leave of Absence Requests – 'Exceptional Circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Generally, **a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance**. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request. If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information.)

All term time absences for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting in advance where possible and agreed with the Social Care and The HOPE Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact the HOPE Virtual School in relation to any requests for term time absence for a child in care.

6. Absent – Other Authorised Reasons

Absent due to other authorised reasons means that the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. These codes are classified for statistical purposes as 'authorised absence'. These codes include:

- Code **T**: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- Code **R**: Religious observance
- Code **I**: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- Code **E**: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made

6.1. Mobile pupil - Parent travelling for occupational purposes

The school will authorise the absence of a mobile pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In which case the child will be dual registered at that school and this school, which is their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

6.2. Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be necessary, they should be requested in advance using the leave of absence in term time process. Additional days taken without exceptional circumstances, will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

6.3. Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)' 2024[3] which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. Where a parent cannot provide any written evidence, we will endeavour to have a conversation with the parent and pupil, if appropriate, which may itself serve as the necessary evidence to record the absence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

If your child is absent from school due to illness you must telephone the school using the absence reporting line: **0117 903 0077 option 1**

All absences must be notified before 9.30am or they may not be authorised.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

It is school policy that where a child has been sent home from school or absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, they must not return to school until 48 hours after the last episode to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead - Mrs Knight for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

[3] Please ask the school for a printed copy of Working Together to Improve School Attendance if required

6.4. Suspensions (AKA Exclusions)

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions.

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the HOPE Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

7. Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences and are not counted as possible attendances):

- Code **Q**: Unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
- Code **Y1**: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Code **Y2**: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Code **Y3**: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Code **Y4**: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Code **Y5**: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Code **Y6**: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Code **Y7**: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

8. Absent - unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or no reason for absence was provided.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Day trips
- Attending a wedding or other celebration (including weddings taking place abroad)

- Closure of a siblings' school or class (for example due to strike action)
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions. The unauthorised absence codes include:

- Code **G**: Holiday not granted by the school
- Code **N**: Reason for absence not yet established
- Code **O**: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- Code **U**: Arrived in school after registration closed

9. Administrative codes

Where necessary and applicable, our school will use the defined administrative codes. These codes are not collected for statistical purposes and are:

- Code **Z**: Prospective pupil not on admissions register
- Code #: Planned whole school closure

10. First Day of Absence Response

A list is kept in the school office of children who walk to school on their own and if they don't arrive, parents/carers are contacted as a priority. Parents who wish to add their child to this list should speak to staff in the school office.

Where a child fails to attend school and no reason has been provided by the parent, the school will make every effort to contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence. However, parents should be aware that the reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent.

Where we are unable to speak to a child's parent or carer on their first day of absence, we will try a child's other emergency contacts and therefore request that parents give us the names of **at least 2 other adults** who can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided, and is concerned for the welfare of the pupil, we may carry out our own 'safe and well' checks, a home visit and/or request a Welfare Check from the police.

11. Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

To help focus on good attendance the school will:

- Give a weekly **Attendance Hero** certificate to 1 child from each class in Friday assembly – this certificate is given by the class teacher to recognise all aspects of good attendance including:

    - 100% attendance for the week
    - Fantastic attendance
    - Always being on time and ready to learn
    - On time all week (particularly for pupils who are usually late but have made an effort to improve/shown improvement)
    - Trying hard to be on time
    - Most improved attendance (particularly for pupils whose previous attendance has been low/sporadic)
    - Consistently high / good / fantastic attendance
    - 100% attendance for the term / X weeks in a row / 2 terms / 4 terms etc

- Provide parents with a copy of their child's attendance percentage at Parents' Evenings
- Provide parents with a copy of their child's Attendance Certificate for the year at the end of Term 6
- Write to parent and carers when there has been an improvement in attendance

  Provide rewards and incentives (as appropriate) to encourage good attendance where it is felt this would support and encourage a child to attend regularly and/or punctually

12. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with the Assistant Head to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

If our school refers a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will at least be evidenced via the sending of a Notice to Improve – attendance warning letter.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic approach to the issue and involve other agencies as necessary. The

exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

13. Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on a regular basis. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents who may both be subject to legal sanctions if their child fails to attend school regularly. It also applies to others who may not be the parent but may have day to day care of the child.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a number of different outcomes for parents and children. Each case is considered individually.

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent(s) are guilty of an offence. Parents with more than one school aged child need to be aware that each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The school will refer cases of unauthorised absence that meet the threshold for a Penalty Notice to the Local Authority for legal action unless there are reasonable grounds for not doing so. The outcome of a referral to the Local Authority may be a Penalty Notice or Prosecution.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for low level offences and a tool to support improved school attendance for example in circumstances associated with an unauthorised holiday taken during term time. They are an alternative to prosecution and may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to a pupil's irregular attendance.

A pupil's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

1. A Penalty Notice. The penalty is £80 per parent, per child payable within 21 days, rising to £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days. (Failure to pay will result in prosecution.) If a second Penalty Notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period the penalty is £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. There will be no option to pay a lower amount.
2. Prosecution.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or up to 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information and Bristol City Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, available here: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare or ask the school for printed copies.)

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

In addition to Penalty Notices, there is a range of other legal interventions open to schools

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

14. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with the law. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The school will follow Bristol City Council's Children Missing Education guidance, and make CME and Pupil Tracking referrals as appropriate. The school will seek advice from the Children Missing Education Officer if unsure about any individual cases: childrenmissingeducation@bristol.gov.uk

15. Following up Unexplained Absences

Our school will follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort will be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N. Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code will be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, our school must amend the pupil's record to Code O.

Where no contact has been made with the school the school will contact parents by email, telephone or letter to try and establish the reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 5 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the O code. If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts.

16. Reporting to Parents

We will report to parents on their child's attendance record annually in the end of year report and at Parents' Evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms. If parents wish to see a copy of their child's attendance summary at any other time during the year, they can ask for a printed copy at the school office.

Where a child's attendance drops below 90%, for whatever reason, our school will write to the parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

17. Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Information about attendance, the use of specific attendance and absence codes and reasons for absences are recorded in our Management Information System (MIS) – Arbor. Information recorded may include, how it was reported, who has reported an absence, the reason given, any additional information pertinent to the absence and any follow-up actions undertaken by staff.

Where staff have concerns about a child's attendance or where additional attendance work or support is undertaken, additional records may be kept in CPOMs, our Safeguarding system.

18. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Headteacher or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

19. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, SEN Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Administering Medication Policy and our Home-School Agreement.

Guidance Documents:

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE 2024)

Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE December 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3

Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DfE January 2013)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school

Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance (DfE February 2023)

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Arranging education for children with who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE December 2023)

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

Keeping children safe in education (DfE September 2022)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

School attendance parental responsibility measures (DfE January 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance

School census guidance and regulation

https://www.gov.uk/education/school-censuses-and-slasc

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion

Home to school travel and transport guidance (DfE July 2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance

Children Missing Education Guidance (Bristol City Council January 2018)

https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-missing-education-cme

Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (Bristol City Council)

https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/education-welfare

APPENDIX 1 – Department for Education (DfE) Attendance Codes

Attending	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

APPENDIX 2 – Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis (6 times a year). It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and requests fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral and Safeguarding (and Designated Safeguarding Lead)

The Assistant Headteacher is responsible for whole-school attendance and the school's strategic approach to attendance. The Assistant Headteacher will meet with parents and create attendance action plans (including where pupils are experiencing barriers to attendance) and liaise with the Education Welfare Service at Bristol City Council as appropriate. The Assistant Headteacher is also responsible for reviewing whole-school and group-specific attendance data (including monitoring the attendance of vulnerable groups - e.g. Pupil Premium or Children in Care)

As Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Assistant Headteacher will also focus on safeguarding and how attendance links to wider safeguarding concerns, taking concerns of the Attendance Team to the school's weekly Safeguarding Team meetings and liaising with external agencies and make referrals to them as required.

Attendance Team

The Attendance Team consists of the Assistant Headteacher, Data Manager, Administration Assistant (Data), Family Support Worker and Children's Support Worker. They will meet as a team weekly to monitor and review attendance across the school – for individual pupils, vulnerable groups and the whole school.

During their meetings, the Attendance Team will identify children whose attendance is a cause for concern and put attendance interventions in place as necessary. Depending on the level of concern, the Attendance Team will involve class teachers and Pastoral Leaders and co-ordinate meetings with parents. In some cases, parents will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and formal action plan will be produced in the form of an Attendance Contract.

- **Administration Assistant (Data)**

  The Administration Assistant is responsible for ensuring that the daily registers are completed accurately and on time, recording the reasons for absences and following up on any missing marks as well as reporting any concerns or patterns of absence to the Attendance Team. In addition, the Administration Assistant (Data) co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence and makes initial contact with parents when a child has an ongoing absence.

- **Data Manager**

  The Data Manager monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level, reports concerns about attendance to the Assistant Headteacher as appropriate, co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence and advises the Headteacher as required. The Data Manager also liaises with and makes referrals to the Education Welfare Service as directed by the Assistant Headteacher and produces information for teachers to support attendance conversations.

- **Family Support Worker**

  The Family Support Worker will also be the point of contact for parents who have their own concerns about their child's attendance and will work with families to improve attendance as well as supporting the Assistant Headteacher with parent meetings with Education Welfare Officer (as appropriate)

- **Children's Support Worker**

  The Children's Support Worker is responsible for creating pupil attendance plans and providing wellbeing support for children experiencing barriers to school attendance as directed by the Assistant Headteacher.

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. Where there are attendance concerns, either raised by the class teacher themselves or by the Attendance Team, they will 'check-in' with the pupil to find out about any reasons for absence as part of their responsibilities under our school's Safeguarding Policy.

Class teachers will also be asked to meet with parents whose child has a falling level of attendance and is flagged as a concern by the Attendance Team.

Pastoral Leaders:

Where there are wider concerns about a child's attendance or when a parent has already met with a class teacher to discuss attendance concerns but there has been limited or no improvement in that child's attendance, they may be asked to meet with the Pastoral Leader to discuss the concerns further.

Pastoral Leaders will also support class teachers and offer advice.