



Byfield School

Attendance Procedure/Policy

Regular attendance at school is vital, without it the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory. It is a simple fact that pupils who do not attend do not achieve. This document explains our attendance policy, how we monitor attendance, what we are required to record about your child's attendance and how you can help. We explain what 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' absences are, the procedure and regulations for school-time holidays and where to find help if you are worried.

REGISTRATION AND ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES AT BYFIELD SCHOOL

(a) The class register is marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Pupils not present to answer their names will be marked absent. Pupils arriving late should inform the school bursar they are present in school. Registration is closed at 9.30 am and 1.30 pm. Any pupil not present by then is considered to be absent whether or not he or she subsequently arrives. If your child is absent or going to a medical appointment please let the school know on the first morning before 9 a.m. – telephone 01327 260349.

(b) Attendance is monitored and the reason for absence is recorded provided that a parent has informed us of this by telephone, in writing or in person.

(c) If we have not heard from parents, we shall try to contact home by telephone. Contact will be made on the first day if a pupil is absent.

(d) If we discover a pattern to absences or are concerned about the frequency or validity of absences we shall contact parents. If we discover a school-based difficulty, we shall seek to remedy it. If there is an out-of-school problem, we shall offer support and access to other services as appropriate. In all cases we shall help the pupil to re-establish him/herself into the usual pattern of school life. This is important in terms of their success in school.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

It is the responsibility of the school under the Education (Pupil Attendance Target Regulations) 2005 to decide whether or not any given absence is 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Some examples of 'authorised' absences are:

- i) when a child is ill or receiving medical attention; (appointment cards should be available)
- ii) when a close family member has died;
- iii) when prior consent has been obtained from the Headteacher, for example for a music examination or religious festival.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

It is commonly believed that 'unauthorised' absence means truancy and although there are occasions when parents are unaware of their son/daughter's absence from school, there are a number of other reasons for absence which the school may not authorise:

- i) staying at home to care for a sick relative (e.g. parent, brother or sister);
- ii) staying at home to await a tradesman or delivery;
- iii) shopping;
- iv) preparing for a holiday and taking an annual family holiday (not long weekends etc) where this cannot be taken in school holiday time because of parents' leave restrictions;
- v) keeping a hairdressing or similar appointment;
- vi) a birthday or family celebration;
- vii) family day visits out;

We do not wish to record unnecessarily absence as 'unauthorised'. Please help us to avoid doing this by providing reasons for absence quickly and by encouraging your son or daughter to recognise that good attendance is important.

HOLIDAYS

Schools may grant holiday leave but are not required so to do. The Regulation intends that this discretion is on the part of the school to grant leave relates to 'going away' on the annual family holiday not staying in the vicinity or taking 'days out'.

DfE (Department for Education) guidance states that in the case of family holidays each case will be considered on its merits and approval is not automatic. Byfield School consistently oppose holidays in term time except in exceptional circumstances and normally all holidays are recorded as unauthorised absence.

Holiday leave will be granted only if:

- i) The parent/carer with whom the child/ren normally resides has a meeting with the head teacher to discuss the reason for the holiday before the holiday is booked.
- ii) Following the discussion with the head teacher a written request is made by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides;
- iii) The request for absence is for the family's main holiday, where this cannot be taken during school holiday time, for example because a parent cannot get time off work during school holidays.

In normal circumstances no more than ten days in any one academic year will be granted.

Holiday leave will not normally be granted:

- i) prior to or during Year 2 and 6 SATS assessments
- ii) where a pupil has a poor record of attendance;
- iii) if the reason for taking the holiday at this time, is the availability of cheaper holidays.

(Some visits offer a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity: please consult the Head teacher in such cases and these may then be recorded as authorised)

Absences without prior approval or outside the criteria will be registered as unauthorised, and may involve liaison with Education Welfare Officer.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- i) Do not allow your son or daughter to stay away from school unless absolutely necessary – attendance matters.
- ii) Please telephone the school to inform us of your child's absence as early as possible.
- iii) Late arrival is recorded if arrival is before 9.30 am/1.30 pm arrival after this time counts as un-authorised absence; please inform us of the reason for lateness.
- (iv).Please try to avoid non-urgent doctors, dentists and hospital appointments during school time.
- v) Please avoid family holidays in term time.
- vi) If your son/daughter seems reluctant to come to school, and you suspect a problem at school, please contact us sooner rather than later. Please do not 'condone' an absence by providing an excuse which may be covering a problem. We are partners in your son/daughter's education and by sharing the problem we may solve it. We do not consider any problem to be trivial: we shall try to act to solve a problem as soon as we know about it.
- vii) You may wish to discuss attendance difficulties with the Education Welfare Officer, or with the School Nurse both of whom may be contacted through the school.

REPORTING ATTENDANCE

Any parent who has reason to check on his/her son/daughter's attendance record can do so by contacting the Head Teacher.

Normally a pupil's attendance record is included as part of their school report in the form of the number of sessions attended out of the possible number and the number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence. We will contact parents if we are concerned about a pupil's attendance – usually if it falls below 90% attendance in one term.

The school is also obliged to report attendance to the local authority and to the DfE so that data can be published. These records are reported as global figures and contain no individual data.

The school also has to make registers available to the local authority's Education Welfare Officer who, as part of their duties may contact parents to seek clarification or follow up matters of concern.

ATTENDANCE STRATEGY PROPOSALS

Objective **To meet our attendance target of 96%**