



Attendance Policy 2020-2021

Introduction

- 1.1 Bearwood Primary and Nursery School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current Government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Bearwood have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader
The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will work with the school's Attendance Leader. The Attendance Leader (Mrs Bennett) will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance via the school newsletters) and that a report is prepared for the governing body termly. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for the completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown below).

REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

ii) The registers will be taken promptly at **9.00 am** and **1.00 pm**. A mark will be made in respect of each child at these times.

iii) Children who arrive shortly after registers have been taken will be marked as a late arrival with the code L. If a child arrives after the close of registers, they will be recorded as absent with the code U.

2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction is distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.
- ii) Bearwood Primary and Nursery School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Bearwood will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**
- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 3 days**, the absence will remain unauthorised. An 'unexplained absence' form will be sent home when an N code has been recorded in the register.
- iv) Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
 - (c) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
 - (d) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
 - (e) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
 - (f) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
 - (g) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period.**
- v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised.

Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;

- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil is staying at home to provide care for a parent, sibling or other relative;
- term time holiday.

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Staff training

The Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

Collection and analysis of data

- 3.1 The Attendance Leader and the Headteacher will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the other members of SLT, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.
- 3.2 Attendance is monitored by the Attendance Leader who will look at reasons for absence and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.
- 3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DFE within the stipulated time frame when requested.

Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

- 4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Bearwood Primary and Nursery School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance is displayed prominently in school. There is an award system in place rewarding class groups with high attendance. A termly raffle awards a family voucher to one child with attendance over 96% - each week that a child has attendance over 96%, they earn a ticket. Children with 100% attendance receive an end of year reward.
- 4.2 First-day calling
The School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.
- 4.4 School Strategies to Tackle Absence

The Attendance Leader is responsible for the school management of attendance, policy and systems to ensure that Bearwood Primary and Nursery School intervene in non-attendance at an early stage.

Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

4.5 Referral to the Borough of Poole 5-19s Team

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specified time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the BCP 5-19s Team. Regulations (Education Pupil Regulations 2006) require schools to inform the LA of every pupil who has been continuously absent without a good reason (i.e. the absence is unauthorised) for 10 school days or more. Schools must also inform the LA of every pupil who fails to attend regularly which is interpreted to mean those pupils who have patterns of unauthorised absence without amassing 10 continuous absences.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register officially closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence.

4.7 If a child arrives late more than three times per half term, they will not be considered to have 100% attendance when awards are given at the end of the academic year.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

4.9 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to the school office.

Term time holidays

The school's policy is that anyone found to have taken an unauthorised term time holiday will be liable to be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. (Appendix A)

We greatly value the positive relationship between home and school and we do not want the issue of holidays to create a conflict in this relationship.

It is important for parents/carers to note that once Bearwood Primary and Nursery School have requested that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a period of unauthorised leave in term time, you will not have an opportunity to discuss this matter further with the Local Authority. Any queries or discussions should be had prior to, or at the time of requesting the leave.'

Extended leave of absence

Any extended leave of absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher. The absence will be unauthorised unless exceptional reasons are given. If an extended leave of absence is

taken without prior authorisation from the Headteacher, a pupil could be removed from the school roll.

COVID 19

Attendance is mandatory from the start of the new school year 2020, except where statutory exemptions apply.

With children starting to mix together again, it is likely that they are going to get seasonal colds and coughs but not all illnesses mean they must stay off school or self-isolate. COVID-19 symptoms are a **high temperature** (hot to touch on the back or chest), a new **continuous** cough (continuous cough is coughing consistently for a while and not just every now and again), a **loss of or change to your taste or smell**. Unless the pupil is showing definite symptoms of COVID, then there is no need for them to be sent home and asked to get a test.

If you feel that your child or a family member may have a symptom of COVID then we ask that you contact 111 for guidance. If 111 advise a COVID test then no pupil will be allowed to return to school until a negative test is acquired or the self-isolation period is over. Please contact the school if you wish to discuss this further.

Please see below for a link to self-isolating.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

Please notify the school when your child is required to self-isolate. Due to safeguarding and well-being, as a school we will contact each family during the self-isolation to offer support and to discuss when a self-isolation period should come to an end. As a school, we will ensure that these pupils have access to remote education and that engagement is monitored.

If a pupil is absent due to the anxiety of COVID, please contact the school immediately so that we can support pupils and families.

Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child). As part of our Home-School Agreement, parents commit to supporting their child to attend school, and as a school, we commit to supporting and encouraging attendance.

Bearwood Primary and Nursery School expects parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school every day, on time whilst striving for 100% attendance;
- not expect the school to agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school;
- notify Bearwood Primary and Nursery School on the first day of absence by phone
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;

- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Bearwood Primary and Nursery School will endeavor to support parents to address their concerns.

Pupils' responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

Pupils should attend school on time and ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

Governors' responsibilities

The governing body will play an appropriate role in challenging and supporting the school in promoting attendance in line with National Average expectations. A named Governor will have responsibility for attendance and ensure regular visits and reviews are made with the Attendance Leader. The attendance governor is Nicola Best.

Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the outcomes of 'Every Child Matters'.

be healthy –

- attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy

stay safe –

- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly

enjoy and achieve –

- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings

make a positive contribution –

- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others

achieve economic well-being –

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year.

Date of review: September 2021

Signed by:

L Bennett

Appendix A

Fixed Penalty Notice: (FPN)

From the 1st September 2013, the Department for Education (DFE) amended the regulations surrounding holidays in term time. The DFE removed references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. These amendments make it clear that Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time and gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

We fully appreciate the financial difficulties that some parents face when booking holidays, particularly during school holidays. The Local Authority will be putting stringent checks in place to ensure that there is a significant reduction in the number of absences from school during term time. The Local Authority will be monitoring all school absences during term time and challenging those schools and parents that do not adhere to the new legislation.

With effect from 1 September 2014, the School Attendance Worker on behalf of BCP 5-19s Team will be issuing fixed penalty notice fines when:-

- **unauthorised absence or 10 unauthorised sessions occur (including unauthorised late marks) (1 session = a half day)**
- **a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school**

Parents / carers will receive communication from the school / School Attendance Worker (SAW) prior to a FPN being issued. Bearwood Primary and Nursery School values building relationships with parents and will endeavour to work in partnership with the home to improve attendance.

Currently the penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 between 21 and 28 days. Fining costs were implemented in Spring 2019 whereby the fine is £60 per child per resident parent/step parent.

If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days of the issue, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure the child attends school regularly. Currently this may lead to a fine of up to £1000.

Attendance Flowchart

Above national average	99	→
	98	
	97	
* NA	96	
Below national average	95	→
	94	
	93	
	92	
	91	
Well below national average	89	→
	88	
	87	
	86	→
	85	
	84	
	83	→
	82	
	81	
	79	→
	78	
	77	
	76	
	75	
	74	
73		
72	→	
71		
Below 70		

100% Attendance
 = No learning missed
 = You have given your child the best chance of success

95% Attendance... means your child misses
 = Half a day of learning every fortnight
 = 2 weeks of school in a year
 = 2 terms and 1 week over the whole of their education
 (133 days missed)

90% Attendance... means your child misses
 = Half a day of learning every week
 = 4 weeks of school in a year
 = 1 school year, 1 term and 3 weeks over the whole of their education
 (266 days missed)

85% Attendance... means your child misses
 = 1 and a half days of learning every fortnight
 = 6 weeks of school in a year
 = 2 years and 21 days over the whole of their education
 (399 days missed)

80% Attendance... means your child misses
 = 1 day of learning every week
 = 8 weeks of school in a year
 = 2 school years, 2 terms and 25 days over the whole of their education
 (532 days missed)

Attendance Counts!

Make sure that you give your child the best opportunities
 for success by sending them into school
EVERY DAY

* NA - national average



Bearwood Primary and Nursery School Attendance: A Guide for Parents



1. **When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **9.00 am** and the afternoon register at **1.00 pm**.

2. **What happens if my child is late?**

If your child arrives **after 9.00 am** he/she will be marked **late (L)**.

If your child arrives after registers close he/she will be marked as **absent (U)**.
(unauthorised absence)

If your child arrives **after 1.00 pm** he/she will be marked **late (L)**.

If your child arrives after registers close he/she will be marked as **absent (U)**.
(unauthorised absence)

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office. If a child's lateness gives cause for concern, a phone call and / or a letter will be sent home outlining the school's concerns, and the desire to avoid a situation where a penalty notice is issued. A meeting may be arranged with the Attendance Leader to discuss reasons / difficulties for lateness. If the lateness persists, the matter will be referred to the School Attendance Worker.

3. **Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report. A letter is not required unless it is for a medical appointment.

4. **What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- Illness - medically unfit for school. Absence for more than 5 consecutive days due to sickness or injury will require a doctor's certificate. The school may request a GP appointment card, a prescription (a photocopy may be taken by the school) or the medicine box/antibiotic bottle to verify the illness/medical reason for absence
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
(Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Family bereavement
- Day of religious observance

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission in writing for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. **In cases of recurring absences**

through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate or proof of illness. If you are unsure as to send your child due to the type of illness, please refer to the guidelines as published by Public Health England.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, extended holidays abroad, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc.

6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

8. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

Bearwood Primary and Nursery School's Attendance Leader is Mrs Bennett who is available to discuss any concerns or problems you may have. Mrs Bray is the Family Support Worker and is always available to offer support.



Bearwood Primary and Nursery School **Attending School Regularly: A Guide for Upper KS2 Pupils**



Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Bearwood Primary and Nursery School. It will help you:

- keep up with your school work and get the best results you can;
- get a job – employers like people who are reliable.

ABSENCES

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- Illness.
- Emergency dental/medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays).
- Family bereavement.
- Day of religious observance.

Looking after brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

NEED HELP?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. **TALK TO SOMEONE** – your class teacher, another member of staff, your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.

We celebrate good attendance by:-

- Weekly attendance trophies and other awards are given to your class groups.
- At the end of every term, if you have 100% you will get a certificate and prize. You will also be entered into a draw for a family prize. Good luck!
- If you achieve 100% attendance for the whole academic year you are invited to an end of year celebration.