

Batheaston CEVC Primary School

Attendance Policy 2016

Statement of intent:

The school aims to work together with parents and carers to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend both regularly and punctually.

Parents' responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- Parents should ensure that, if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as illness, they should contact the school as soon as possible, preferably on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, by letter, email or in person. When phoning the school, there will be an answer phone message asking parents to leave a message so they can avoid having to wait for a member of staff to answer at a busy time of day. Verbal messages on the parent's behalf from an adult relative or representative such as a child minder or friend may be accepted at the school's discretion on the first day of absence – subsequent absences must be explained by the parent. Verbal messages from children, e.g. siblings, will not be accepted.
- Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this, on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason, the school will record such absences as unauthorised. In some cases, this may be retrospective and authorisation may be withdrawn should circumstances arise leading the school to decide that the reason given was not accurate. If this occurs, this will be discussed with the parent.
- Parents should ensure that their child arrives on time for the start of registration, **(8.55am.)** Families are welcome on site after 8.45am and the school bell is rung at 8.50am. At this time, parents and children can go into their classrooms to complete an EMT (Early Morning Task) with the teacher. Parents are requested to leave at this point unless they need to speak to the teacher urgently. The teacher will only be available for a brief chat. Please ask for an appointment if you need a longer discussion/catchup.

Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. should report to the school office and the parent should sign the Late Book (in the case of older unaccompanied children, the child should follow this procedure).

- Parents should avoid booking family holidays during term-time.
(See Appendix 1 – term-time holidays).

School responsibilities:

- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress and personal wellbeing.
- Registers will be taken twice daily (at 9.00am and 1.00pm, and 1.15pm for KS2). Registers will close at 9.00 and 1.00/1.15pm. Any child arriving after the close of the registration period will be recorded as "late" for that session.
- Teachers will complete registers in accordance with guidance given by the headteacher. The headteacher will inspect registers regularly in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to identify any potential attendance problems at an early stage.
- Should a class teacher have any concerns about a child's attendance and punctuality, the headteacher must be informed.
- Should a child be absent, the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. Should no explanation have been received, the class teacher will inform staff in the office who will endeavour to make contact with the parent or carer.
- The headteacher will regularly review collect attendance data and use this during meetings with the staff and CMEO (Children Missing Education Officer). These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the CMEO. Other agencies, such as Social Care, may also be involved.

Persistent absentees:

Persistent absentees are defined as children whose attendance is below 85% and where unsatisfactory reasons are given for absence. However, the procedures outlined below may apply to children whose attendance is above 85% but where there are concerns about deteriorating attendance or where patterns are emerging, e.g. regular absences on particular days or persistent lateness.

All of the above policy applies to persistent absentees, with the following additions:

- Children's names are highlighted in the Attendance file in the School office. All class teachers are aware who these children are.
- If no message is received, either the office staff or headteacher must be informed and must attempt to contact the parent at the earliest opportunity. If no contact is made or the message received is unsatisfactory, the CMEO must be contacted (01225 394353).

Additional information:

- In the case of minor ailments, parents are encouraged to send their child to school and staff will 'keep an eye' on them. However, if your child has a temperature, please keep him/her at home. If your child has sickness or diarrhoea, please keep them away from school **for 24 hours** after the last bout.
- Requesting leave of absence in special circumstances:

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to maximise their educational opportunities. Interruptions in school attendance disrupt continuity of learning and have a negative impact on attainment. It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if child/ren attend regularly. There is a direct correlation between achievement and attendance, well before GCSEs.

The Government's guidance states that only under **special circumstances** may the headteacher consider giving permission for a child to be absent from school for a maximum of 10 days in any one school year.

Please read the B&NES document below regarding Holidays in Term Time. Holidays will not be authorised for children whose attendance is below 90% unless for very specific reasons (each request will be considered carefully).

If you are thinking of taking your children on holiday during term time you need to know that:

- ***A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt the continuity of their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away; they are also less prepared for lessons upon their return. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which you and we must seek to avoid.***
- ***Many parents say that the time their child misses because of a holiday doesn't affect their school work. However a child who has 10 days holiday each year of their school life will miss 24 weeks (nearly a full school year) of their formal education. This is in addition to unavoidable absences – for instance, if your child is ill.***
- ***Please do not ask for leave of absence for a family holiday in term time if you can possibly avoid it. If you do have to ask for permission to take your child out of school for a holiday:***
 - ***Try to avoid periods when your child is preparing for or taking examinations or important tests.***
 - ***Give at least two weeks notice of any planned absence.***
- ***Schools will consider every request individually. However, the most important consideration will be the effect that such an absence would have on your child's education. Schools cannot and will not authorise absence for holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.***

Please be advised that low cost travel or arrangements made by a family member or friends is not an exceptional circumstance.

Holidays taken in term time should be the exception rather than the rule.

It may also be helpful to read the notes below, copied from the BANES website:

School Attendance



Advice for Parents

What can you do to support your child's attendance?

- Make sure your child understands how important it is to attend school regularly and that you do not approve of him or her missing school.
- Take an active interest in your child's schoolwork. Ask them about their day, and praise and encourage their achievements at school.
- If your child tells you they are bored with school ask to meet with their teachers.
- If your child makes excuses to try to avoid going to school, listen to them - you may find there is an underlying problem. It could be problems with schoolwork – it could be bullying.
- Make sure that your child gets to school on time. Arriving late can be disruptive for your child and the other children in the class.

Absences

There may be times when your child has to miss school:

- If your child is ill, contact the school on the first day of your child's illness. Staff will be concerned if they do not hear anything.
- If your child is ever off school, you must tell the school why. Do this by following the arrangements made by the school.
- If you want permission for your child to miss school for a special occasion such as a wedding, you should ask for permission well in advance and give full details.

Do not expect the school to authorise every absence. Shopping trips during school hours, days off for birthdays or looking after sick relatives are all examples of unacceptable reasons for absence.

Truancy

Signs that your child may be truanting

- not having any homework
- not talking about school
- not bringing you any school letters or information
- having a knowledge of daytime TV
- never taking equipment to school (PE)
- putting a change of clothing in school bag
- asking you what time you will be home

- forming friendships with other young people you suspect of not attending school
- attempting to keep you away from school events.

If you suspect that your child may be missing school or is unhappy at school, you should contact the school as soon as possible so that you can work with them to resolve any difficulties. You can also contact the [Children Missing Education Service](#) if you need further advice or support.

Attendance - What does the law say?

Parents

The Law says that parents of children aged between 5-16, who are on a school roll, must make sure that their child goes to school both regularly and punctually. This means that children are in school when they should be and that they arrive at school in time for both morning and afternoon sessions.

If a child who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly and there are no legitimate reasons, then parents are guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Schools

Schools are responsible for the keeping and marking of attendance registers. Schools will want to know why pupils are absent and they must decide whether the absence is for an authorised or unauthorised reason.

Schools must report poor attendance to the Children Missing Education Service (CMES), who will then work with those involved to assess the reasons for poor attendance and help find a solution to the difficulties.

Academies

Academies make their own arrangements to address poor school attendance. These arrangements could be with the Local Authority or private companies.

The Local Authority (LA)

The LA is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities. In Bath and North East Somerset, the CMES fulfils this role and will consider legal action where other strategies to improve attendance have failed.

In addition to prosecuting parents, the Children Missing Education Service may apply to the Family Proceedings Court for an Education Supervision Order (ESO). An ESO makes the LA responsible for certain aspects of the child's education.