

Attendance at Botley C of E Primary School 2024-2025



It is really important that all parents understand the school's approach to attendance and the high level of importance that we place on it. Following decreased attendance post-Covid, the Department for Education are also holding schools more accountable for the work they do to ensure that they have good levels of attendance. We want to work together with you to ensure that your child is regularly in school and has good attendance.

Much of the information below comes from the updated version of the Department for Education document "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" – the link for which is shown below. This is a statutory document that sets out what schools must do when it comes to managing attendance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of your children and endeavour to ensure we are a community where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled to. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a very high level of attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

Attendance Facts

Above 97%	Less than 6 days absence a year	Excellent attendance! Pupils with this attendance should achieve the best they can.
95%	Less than 10 days absence in a year	Pupils with this attendance are more likely to achieve their targets at the end of the year.
90%	20 days absence over the year	Pupils with this attendance are missing approximately a month (20 days) of school per year and may fall behind in Maths, English and other subjects; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
85%	30 days absence in a year	These pupils are missing approximately 6 weeks of school a year. It will be very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best.
80%	Pupils with this attendance are missing a day for every week of school.	It will be almost impossible to keep up with their work and achieve their best.

Overall Punctuality

Arriving at school on times very important. The school gates open at 8:30am with the classroom doors opening at 8:40am. From this time the children in class will be working with adults and undertaking learning. The main gates close at 8:50am and all children should be in school and in their classrooms by this time.

Being late can mean.....

5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost learning time a year

10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost learning time a year

15 minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost learning time a year

20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost learning time a year

30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost learning time a year

Illness

We obviously recognise that there are times when children fall ill and of course we want them to remain at home when this is the case so that they can recover and not make other children ill.

We know that illness is unavoidable and to be expected. However, it is very important that you ring us every day that your child is absent from school, letting us know the reason why.

You would not need to ring every day if we know your child is going to be off for a specific amount of time. For example, after an operation, with chicken pox etc.

If you do not contact us, we will need to ring you, as part of our safeguarding procedures, to find out why your child is not at school.

Just to remind you, your child must stay off school for 48 hours if they have suffered from sickness and/or diarrhoea. However, if your child has a minor complaint such as a runny nose, mild cough or mild sore throat, then they should attend school.

Holidays and Leave of Absence in Term Time

Department for Education regulations state that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. Their latest guidance specifically states that "Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or a desire for a holiday...to be an exceptional circumstance."

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday **and in the vast majority of cases holiday will not be authorised**. Ultimately, the expectation on schools is to now be even more stringent and robust around attendance.

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the School Office) in advance and before making any travel arrangements. If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will **be unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the national thresholds parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty notice, or other legal action in accordance the code. If your child is absent from school and we become aware that you have been on holiday it will be treated as an unauthorised absence.

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

Monitoring Attendance

We regularly monitor attendance and identify if there are any children in the school whose attendance we are concerned about. If this is the case we will let you know and we will seek to work with you to support you with your child's attendance. Once a child's attendance is lower than 90% they are classed as being "persistently absent" from school. It is important that if this is the case for your child, without an acceptable reason - such as significant illness, that we work together to ensure your child is in school more. Ultimately very poor attendance that is not addressed can lead to legal

action being taken against a child's parents because it is a legal responsibility to ensure children are in school.

If there are specific reasons why your child has a low level of attendance then please do talk to us because we are here to help. Mrs Heather Thomson, our Family and Child Support Worker, can always be contacted and can help you with any attendance issues your child is having. If there are friendship issues then please ensure you contact your child's class teacher in the first place.

Penalty Notices

The threshold for a penalty notice is ten sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a three year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

Celebrating Good Attendance

We want all children to enjoy coming to school and for it to be a place they enjoy being because of the relationships they build with the staff and their friends, the opportunities they have and the love of learning that they develop. As such, we will calculate the overall attendance for each class each half term and reward that class with our attendance trophy. The outcome will be shared with you in the Headteacher's newsletter. This is an extra incentive to encourage good attendance.

Our School Attendance

Our overall school attendance for the last four years is shown below, this does not include periods of national lockdown due to the pandemic. We are aiming to have an overall attendance figure for this year of 96.3% as a minimum and for it to be better than the national figure. It is also important that we reduce the percentage of children that are identified as being persistently absent and that we reduce the occurrences of unauthorised absence.

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Overall Attendance	95.2%	95.7%	96.2%
Persistently Absent	8.2%	8.2%	7.7%
Unauthorised Absence	1.1%	1.0%	1.1%

If you have any further queries about attendance, especially around unauthorised absence then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,



Mr. J. Cooil
Headteacher teacher