

Attendance Policy

Little Bowden Primary School



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Contents

School's aims and vision	3
The Law	3
Registration.....	3
Absence.....	4
Authorised absences.....	4
Unauthorised absences.....	4
Our approach to addressing absence	4
First Day Calling.....	5
Illness	5
Medical Appointments.....	5
Punctuality	5
End of the School Day	6
Leave of Absence or Family Holidays during Term Time	6
Compassionate Leave	7
Change of School.....	7
Religious Observance.....	7
Public Performances	7
Procedures improve attendance	8
Letter 1 – Concern.....	8
Letter 2 – Referral to the Court Team.....	8
APPENDIX A.....	9
APPENDIX B.....	10

Attendance Policy

School's aims and vision

Little Bowden Primary School expects good attendance from its pupils in order that they can take full advantage of the learning experiences provided for them and aims to support pupils in developing positive attitudes towards punctuality and attendance.

Overwhelming evidence shows that children who attend school regularly are more likely to:

- Make better progress academically and socially.
- Find school routines and school work easier to cope with.
- Maintain closer friendships with other children.

Our aim is to:

- Achieve attendance levels of 96% and above across the school.
- Reduce persistent absence.
- Significantly reduce requests for holiday during term time.
- Improve punctuality.
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance and punctuality between home and school.
- Positive measures in place to encourage 100% attendance.

The Law

The Education Act 1996 states: "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence".

Based on the above Act, we expect parents to ensure their children attend school regularly. Failure to ensure regular attendance can lead to parents being issued either with a Penalty Notice or Prosecuted through the Magistrates Court.

- A Penalty Notice stands at £60 rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days.
- A Prosecution can result in a fine of up to £2,500 and or 3 months imprisonment.

Registration

Registers are a legal document and provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils on roll at the school. The class teacher is responsible for marking the register at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.

Children are expected to arrive at school by 8:45am. The register is taken at 9:00am and returned to the office at 9:10am. Children who arrive in school after 8.50am must go directly to the school office where their time of arrival and reason for lateness is noted. They are then marked as late (L) in the register (if after 9.00am). Arrivals after 9.30am will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless the Head Teacher accepts the reason given.

The register is taken within 10 minutes of the afternoon session beginning.

Absence

When a child is absent from school, the absence is recorded by the school as either authorised or unauthorised;

Parents cannot authorise their children's absence.

Authorised absences

Absence may be authorised for occurrences such as:

- pupil sickness (evidence may be required);
- serious or critical illness of a close relative;
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments (evidence may be required);
- exceptional short term domestic circumstances;
- religious observance;
- bereavement;
- wedding of immediate family member (limited number of days);
- attendance at or in connection with a Child's Hearing or Care Review;
- approved activities for sports and the arts (evidence may be required);
- travelling (where ascribed to the Traveller Community).

Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absence (where the school will not approve absence). Absence will not be authorised for events such as:

- shopping trips;
- birthday or other day trips;
- non-medical appointments;
- closure of a sibling's school for training days;
- family holidays.

Our approach to addressing absence

We expect our pupils to attend school regularly and on time. The following information sets out the school approach to absence.

First Day Calling

If a child is absent from school, parents are expected to call the school on the first day of absence by 9:30am stating a reason. As a school we take our safeguarding duties very seriously. If parents have not contacted the school, we will initiate our "First Day Calling" procedure and phone/text parents at home or work to ascertain the reason for their child's absence [before 10.00am]. It is therefore vital that parents continually update the school on any changes to their contact details.

If the school is unsuccessful at contacting a parent and still remains concerned about the child's absence, further action will be taken by the school on that day, such as conducting a home visit.

If contact or the home visit remains unsuccessful, we may enlist the help of the police and request a "Safe and Well" check to be conducted on the grounds of safeguarding. We may also enlist the help of Traveller Services prior to conducting a home visit.

Illness

We expect parents to contact the school on the first morning of their child's illness, giving an explanation and expected date of return. Should the child's illness last more than a day, parents are expected to call the office every day to inform us of the absence. Keeping a child off school for minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold should be avoided.

Information and advice on whether your child is too ill for school, can be found on the NHS website be [clicking here](#).

In the case of a child with a high level of absences for medical reasons, we may request parents to provide evidence such as a stamped appointment card/compliment slip, prescription or prescribed medicine to support their child's absence. This is so the school can code the absence correctly.

Repeated absence from school for illness will be discussed in school with a member of the leadership team and potentially referred to The Attendance Team to address the matter.

Medical Appointments

Parents are asked where possible, to avoid making medical appointments for their children during the school day. Appointment letters and stamped appointment cards will be required for the school to code a child's absence correctly.

Punctuality

It is important to foster positive attitudes to arriving at school on time. Therefore the expectation is that parents ensure their children arrive at school by 8:45am, prepared for the school day. Children who arrive late not only miss vital information given at the beginning of lessons, their arrival also disrupts and interferes with that of the teacher and other children in the classroom and can also make the child feel self-conscious.

Children who arrive after the school gates have closed must come into the building via reception, where the time and reason for arriving late will be recorded.

Parents of children who appear to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents will be required to attend a meeting in school to address the issue.

End of the School Day

Parents are responsible for making the proper arrangements to ensure their child/children are collected promptly from school at the end of the school day.

Parents are expected to notify the school as soon as is practical if for any reason they will be late collecting their child/children at the end of the school day or from an after-school club.

Parents are expected to notify the school if a designated adult (one which is not listed on the pupil's profile) will be collecting their child/children with a password to allow safe release of the child/children.

If attending an After School Club/Care, then parents are expected to collect their child/children as soon as the club is finished. The school is not responsible for child/children's supervision once school or after school clubs have finished.

Persistent late collection of children may result in the school informing Social Care on the grounds of safeguarding.

Leave of Absence or Family Holidays during Term Time

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday or requesting leave of absence during term time.

A pupil's absence in term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days that they are away, but they are also less well prepared for the lessons building on this when they return.

From 1st September 2013, the amendments to the Education Regulations in relation to absence from school give **NO** entitlement to parents to take their child/children on holiday during term time. However, the Head Teacher can, **in exceptional circumstances**, grant a leave of absence. The Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Parents must notify the Head Teacher in writing if they wish to apply for leave of absence from school for any reason using the appropriate form (see Appendix B) or download the form from the school's website by [clicking here](#). Each request will be considered individually, case by case, taking into account the circumstances and the child's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling. The following will not be deemed as exceptional circumstances:

- The availability of cheap holidays or desired accommodation;
- Holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term;
- Holidays booked by a third party.

Parents are strongly discouraged from applying for leave of absence which coincides with the start of the school year, as the first few weeks of the school year are very important for learning routines, establishing relationships and expectations, and building friendships.

The school reserves the right to withdraw authorisation should a child's attendance deteriorate between the leave of absence application and the time when the absence is due to occur. The school recognises that parents' circumstances (financial position, working commitments, etc.) vary enormously, but the Head Teacher is nonetheless required to ensure that children only miss school if it is absolutely unavoidable.

Parents of pupils in Year 6 are made aware of the fact that statutory testing takes place annually in May and cannot be taken at any other time. Therefore the Head Teacher is unable to grant Leave of Absence permission for Year 6 pupils during the week of the statutory tests.

Compassionate Leave

The death of a close family member can be a traumatic experience for a child/children and as such the school will deal sympathetically with a parent's request for their child/children to be absent from school to attend a funeral or associated event.

Change of School

If parents decide to move their child/children to another school, they must inform the current school as soon as possible. The child/children will not be removed from the current school roll until the following information has been received:

- The date the child/children will be leaving the current school.
- The date the child/children will be starting the new school.
- The name and address of the new school.
- Confirmation from the new school that they have started. Only then will they be removed from roll and a CTF sent to their new school.
- The family's new home address and phone number, if moving to a new house.

Religious Observance

We will authorise absence on these grounds provided written confirmation is received from the religious body to which the parent belongs, stating that the day or days are exclusively set apart for religious observance.

We would appreciate if parents could give advance notice of their religious observance days.

Public Performances

Children from birth to the end of Year 11, who take part in entertainment performances, both professional and amateur, require a "child performance licence" which are issued by the Local Authority where the child lives; this is Legislation. The license is designed to protect the child's health, education and welfare. The licence applies to children performing on licenced premises, if there is a charge for the performance, if the child performs for more than 4 days in a fixed period, for paid sport, photography or modelling and if the child is going to be absent from school.

Should a child be involved in a performance that will fall on a school day, their parent must request permission from the school in writing, with supporting documentation for the child to attend. Your request will be discussed with the Head Teacher after which you will be written to with a decision or the relevant form signed.

We would appreciate it if parents could give advance notice of their child's performance days.

Children who perform without a license may be breaking the law. This could mean a risk of prosecution for a production company.

For further information, contact the Child Performance and Employment Team:

Phone: 0116 305 7820

Fax: 0116 305 6330

Email: childreninentertainment@leics.gov.uk

[Procedures to improve attendance](#)

As part of our strategy to improve attendance, we write to parents if we become concerned about their child's attendance and punctuality. We have a letter system in place as follows:

[Letter 1 – Concern](#)

Every half term we will write to parents whose child's attendance falls to 92.5% or below. This will be an informational letter informing parents of their child's attendance and that it is being monitored.

[Letter 2 – Parent Surgery](#)

Should 'Letter 1' not bring about an improvement in your child's attendance, you will receive 'Letter 2', which will contain a meeting time to discuss your child's attendance with our Family Support Worker. This will be an informal meeting where reasons for your child's absence can be explored and discussed.

[Letter 3 – Parent Contract](#)

Should 'Letter 2' not bring about an improvement in your child's attendance, you will receive 'Letter 3', which will contain a meeting time to discuss your child's attendance with the Deputy Head Teacher. This will be a formal meeting, where a contract will be drawn up between school and parents in an attempt to improve attendance.

[Letter 4 – Referral to the Court Team](#)

We will send this letter to parents should the Parent Contract not bring about an improvement in a child's attendance. This letter states that the matter is being referred to Leicestershire County Council's Attendance Team who will contact the parent to address the issues which may be preventing their child from attending school regularly.

NB: We ask parents to take note that in accordance with the Education Act 1996, the Attendance Team will initiate legal proceedings against parents should their child's attendance not improve.

APPENDIX A

School Register - Attendance Codes Present at school:

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

L Late arrival before the register has closed

Authorised:

B Off-site educational activity

C Leave of absence authorised by the school

D Dual registered – at another educational establishment

E Excluded

H Holiday authorised by the school

I Illness (not medical/dental appointments)

J At an interview with prospective employers/or at another educational establishment

M Medical or dental appointment

P Participating in a supervised sporting activity

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

Unauthorised:

G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Head Teacher

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Absent from school without authorisation

U Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes:

X Not required to be in school

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Z Pupil not on the admission register

Planned whole or partial school closure

APPENDIX B

Little Bowden Primary school

CHILD'S EXCEPTIONAL CURUMSTANCES ABSENCE APPLICATION FORM

NAME OF CHILD/CHILDREN: CLASS	
..... CLASS	
DATE OF ABSENCE: FROM: TO:	
NUMBER OF DAYS	
PLEASE NOTE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.• Any leave taken without prior consultation with the school will be marked as "unauthorised absence."	
Reason why this absence is required and could not take place outside of term time hours; 	
SIGNED:	DATE:

Reply from Head Teacher;

NAME OF CHILD/CHILDREN: CLASS	
..... CLASS	
DATE OF ABSENCE: FROM: TO:	
NUMBER OF DAYS	
I am able to give permission for you to take your child/children out of school;	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am unable to give permission for you to take your child/children out of school;	<input type="checkbox"/>
REASON FOR DAYS NOT AUTHORISED: 	
SIGNED:	DATE: