

# Attendance Policy

Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school.

Reviewed June 2021



## Aims of this policy

In striving to enable each child to reach their full potential, Bow Community Primary School stress the importance to both children and parents of the need for maximum attendance and punctuality.

## Rights and Responsibilities

### **Bow Community School:**

- Expects pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive in a fit condition to learn.
- Will encourage good attendance and will investigate all absenteeism.
- Staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- Will work closely with parents should attendance / punctuality give cause for concern.

### **Pupils:**

- Pupils will ensure that they attend regularly and **on time** (the doors open at 8.55am).
- Pupils will have individual records of attendance / punctuality.

### **Parents:**

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly, punctually and are properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents are responsible for informing the school as early as possible of the reason for any absence (by letter, phone call or personal visit).
- Parents are required to complete a Request for Authorised Absence only in **exceptional circumstances**, and submit **3 weeks prior to the date on the authorised absence date**.  
*Authorisation of this request within term time is not automatic.*
- Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance.

## Authorising absence

All absences must be explained by a parental note or message. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence. All absence-related messages received by any member of staff will be conveyed to the school office. If no information from home is forthcoming, the school office will contact the child's parents. The school office will pay particular attention to the possibility of unauthorised absence and take speedy action if this is suspected.

We encourage that routine appointments and check-ups (hospital, dentist or optician) are made during the holidays, or outside school hours.

**If appointments are made during the school day, we will require sight of an appointment slip before an absence can be authorised.**

**Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:**

- Sickness
- **Unavoidable** medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

**Absence from school will not be authorised for:**

- Any type of shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents (an exception to this might be where a child is looking after a disabled parent)
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

School is no longer able to grant applications for family holidays that are taken in term time. Absence during term time may be agreed in exceptional circumstances only.

## Parental requests for authorised absence in term time (exceptional circumstances only)

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in **advance**. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactory up to the date covered by the request.

A parent must complete an **Absence Request Form** from the school office when asking for absence to be authorised. Absences will be authorised for exceptional circumstances only. **School will always put the education of the child first when considering whether or not to authorise an absence.** In doing so, school will also take into account the child's age, stage of education, internal assessment weeks and educational progress when making a decision. It is not the school's decision to fine parents for unauthorised absences, but is at the discretion of Devon's Educational Social Welfare Service.

The Governing Body has agreed that the school will not authorise any requests for holidays:

- If your child has an attendance level below 90% calculated over the previous twelve months.
- In the **first two weeks of the school year** (this is a crucial time when all children should be settling in to their new classroom routines and missing this time is detrimental to forming new relationships and routines in a new class)
- **For any time in May before or during assessments such as SATs** (this is a time when it is important that all Year 6 children are in school as it is a week of examinations organised by the Department for Education and these tests cannot be taken at any other time).

## Fines for unauthorised absence

It is now Devon County Council policy to issue Penalty Notices or fines for unauthorised absence. Details of the implementation of fines can be found in Devon County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, of which the following is an extract: "*Following the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 it is possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will require each parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a fine, currently £60.00 if paid within 21 days increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days.*"

These Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised holidays within term time and unauthorised absence from school when the circumstances appear to have been avoidable, (e.g. child too tired after a late night, a birthday treat, family friends/relatives visiting).

## Strategies for promoting attendance / punctuality

- Parents, pupils and staff are to be made aware of the importance of good attendance including distribution of Local Authority generated information where appropriate. Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance.
- Parents will receive regular updates regarding the attendance for their child(ren).
- Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 90% may be invited in to school by the Head teacher to discuss strategies to improve their child's attendance.
- Structured meetings will be held at appropriate times with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance / punctuality is a source of concern [persistent absence].
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 80% will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

## Equal Opportunities

We aim to offer an education and working environment appropriate to each individual pupil's needs regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, sexuality, disability or religious beliefs.