



# **BRIDGE & PATIXBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Key Contact Personnel in School**

**Person(s) Responsible:** Matthew Harper  
Senior Leadership team

**Date of Review:** Summer 2017

**Date of Next Review:** Summer 2019

**BRIDGE & PATRIBOURNE CEP SCHOOL**  
**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**“ATTENDANCE MATTERS....”**

**As a school we aim to:**

- Maintain an attendance rate of a *minimum* of 95% (our current target is 97%)
- Maintain parents’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

**Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

**As a parent you can help us by:**

- Contacting us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.00am. The school has an answer phone to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call.
- You can also get in touch by email on office@bridge.kent.sch.uk.
- Or you can call into school and report to the school office by 9.00am.
- Arranging dental and doctor’s appointments out of school hours or during school breaks or lunchtime.
- Sending in a note explaining and confirming the reason for absence on your child’s return to school after an illness even though you have notified us by phone.
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

**We shall:**

- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90%.
- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as soon as possible by telephoning on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters, the school prospectus and website
- Publish our attendance rate in the school prospectus
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance
- Publish your child’s attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child’s attendance by writing to you and inviting you in to discuss the situation with our admissions officer and/or headteacher if absences persist;
- If we continue to have concerns or if attendance moves below 90% we will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, who visits the school regularly to review, monitor and support attendance matters.

## Authorised Absence

*Some absences are allowed by law and are known as “authorised absences”. For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance. We are not required to authorise all these absences and sometimes it is necessary to refer the child to the EWO or school nurse.*

We realise that there are **rare** occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

## Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- waiting on a delivery
  - going shopping or for a haircut
  - unapproved holidays or trips
  - because it is your child’s birthday
  - sleeping in after a late night
  - going for a family day out
  - where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
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- Unauthorised Absences have to be reported to the Local Authority via the EWO. The EWO may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences or may challenge the school if there are too many authorised absences

## Punctuality

It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions, reinforce learning from the previous day or organise learning for the rest of the day. If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.

- The school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect our children to be in the playground before this time ready to line up when the whistle is blown; You need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8.45am.
- Registers are marked at **8.50am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.
- At **9.00 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child’s punctuality. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and Admissions Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. If the problem persists, this may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice.
- Punctuality is equally important at the end of the day. Children who remain uncollected at the end of the school day will be referred to the EWO.

*Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.*

## **Term Time Leave of Absence**

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils' miss as a result of family holidays. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the board of governors. **All holiday requests will take into consideration your child's attendance rate. If holiday requests mean that your child's rate dips to 90% or below, then it will not be authorised.**

### **It is our policy:**

- Requests for long term absences of more than 5 days **will not** be authorised once children reach statutory school age.
- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence in term-time need to write or email the school to [office@bridge.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@bridge.kent.sch.uk).
- Try to minimize time out of school by timing holidays at either end of a school break. Avoid taking a holiday in September, as it is very unsettling for a child to miss the start of the school year.

Absence taken and not authorised could be liable for a Fixed Penalty fine. Taking further time than agreed will be unauthorised and you risk *your* child being taken off the school roll.

### **We will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:**

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS) for year 6 pupils
- During May for all year groups as this is the time we assess the children.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 90% for any individual or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave
- If the school does not agree and you take your child on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised
- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the child is in the classroom.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice

## **Leavers**

If your child is leaving the school, parents are asked to:

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving. (a form is available at the school office)
- Confirm the school has your current mobile phone number
- Take our school's compliments slip so the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred

*"Wisdom, Trust, Forgiveness, Thankfulness, Friendship, Compassion"*

- Let us know when you move

### Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills and the Local Authority. The School Attendance and Behaviour Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

*We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards.*

***“Every day counts...”***

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| <b>Policy review date:</b>   | Summer 2017   |
| <b>Reviewed on:</b>          | Summer 2017<br>Matthew Harper<br>Senior Leadership Team |
| <b>Date of next Review :</b> | Summer 2019   |