



Bluebell Park School

Attendance Policy and Procedures

Approved by: [Name]

Date: Updated June 2023

Last reviewed on: September 2022

Next review due by: September 2023



Attendance Policy

Bluebell Park School is committed to providing all pupils with an appropriate and effective education in a safe and happy environment. Each child is welcomed, valued and respected and encouraged to respect themselves and others. We aim to empower all children to gain the essential skills both academic and social that will equip them for life. We believe that education is essential for all. To achieve their full potential children need to attend regularly and punctually. Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue that must be treated promptly and seriously. In all cases of non-attendance it is essential that early action is taken. This supplements the local authority guidance on supporting attendance.

The aim of the policy is to promote the 'most effective education for pupils at Bluebell Park School'. In order to achieve this, it is vital that pupils attend school consistently and punctually. In order that pupils and parents co-operate with this policy and pupils gain their full entitlement to education, parents will be informed of the requirement on attendance.

The Governors, Headteacher, and staff acknowledge that there is a strong correlation between high attendance pupil progress. We adhere to the DfE Guidance on School Attendance: [School attendance guidance May 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642812/school-attendance-guidance-may-2022.pdf) and apply the recommendations relating to using pupil registers and attendance codes. [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642812/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance.pdf)

Attendance and punctuality expectations:

The school day starts at 9:00am and finishes at 3:20pm. Registers close in the morning session at 9:30am and 1:45pm in the afternoon session.

Process for requesting leave of absence:

Requests for Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Head of School. Leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. An Absence Request Form should be obtained from the main office and be completed and sent into school before any arrangements are made. Approval for extended holidays abroad will only be considered on receipt of a written request and completion of the school's Holiday Request Form, and only then in exceptional circumstances. The Governing Body has delegated this responsibility to the Headteacher. If consent is given it will be for a maximum period of 6 weeks with an agreed return date. If the pupil fails to attend after this period this absence will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to Social Care.

How to report an unexpected absence

To report an unexpected absence please use one of the following methods:

1. Log the absence through the parent app – absence section
2. Phone into school and leave a message – 0151 477 8350
3. Write a message in the home school book

PLEASE NOTE – WE CANNOT TAKE VERBAL MESSAGES FROM TRANSPORT ESCORTS.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences



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It is for the school to decide whether or not to authorise any absences. The school will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no parental explanation is given.
- For extended visits overseas where no approval has been given.
- For holidays in term time (unless there are exceptional circumstances.)
- For shopping trips.
- For leisure days out.
- Where it is believed a parent is condoning an unnecessary absence.
- In other cases where it is deemed there is no reasonable explanation.

Roles and responsibilities

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.	Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.

Parental Responsibility

Adults have a primary role in ensuring the attendance of pupils. Good examples of attendance and timekeeping by staff and parents provide role models for pupils. Parents are notified regularly via letters and newsletters about the importance of attendance and timekeeping, and their responsibility in ensuring regular attendance and the importance of notifying absences to school.

In our school, contact between parents and School is encouraged in order to account for absences. This may take the form of letters, notes in the home/school book, absence report via the parent app, emails or telephone calls. Office staff will notify the class teacher who can then complete their register.

Change of address and other contact information

Parents must inform the school immediately if they, or the named emergency contacts have a change of



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address, phone number or email address. In case of emergency we must be able to contact the parents, carers or a third named person. Parents must provide this information when they first register their child, and keep information including telephone numbers up to date.

School Procedures, roles and responsibilities

Morning registers close at 9.30am. Class teachers should carry out ongoing monitoring of both attendance and punctuality. First day absence calls are made by office staff as soon as the registers have been completed. The register is amended to show the reason for the absence. A message will be left on the home phone/mobile phone if we are unable to speak to parents about their child's absence. If no contact is made with the parents by the third day a "Safe and Well" visit will be made. If no one is at home every attempt will be made to find further information i.e. from neighbours and Emergency Contacts. If no progress is made we will contact the missing children team and report the child as missing.

The named senior leader responsible for attendance is Jamie Campbell.

If a child returns to school where no contact has been able to have been made during the absence, the parents will receive a letter from the Headteacher / Senior Leader reiterating the school procedures for pupil absence. A weekly Safeguarding meeting takes place at which attendance is analysed.

All unauthorised absences are discussed and appropriate action is agreed at this meeting. In cases of frequent or long term absences a decision will be made at the meeting on appropriate next steps. At Bluebell Park School, attendance concerns will be followed up by the Family Support Worker, in collaboration with the DSL. If a parent contacts the school to say a child is ill and will be off for a week the school will do a "Safe and Well" check after the third day.

Where children are admitted to hospital the designated Nurse will contact the Children's Hospital on a regular basis. Our Family Support Worker / or Assistant Headteacher will also contact the family and will provide liaison to enable the pupil to return to school as soon as they are well enough to do so.

Pupils who arrive late at school because of difficulties with organised transport (taxi or minibus) will be marked as present. Where patterns of consistent late running by contractors occur, the Local Authority will be informed. Pupils who arrive late in school will be required to report to the school office where their late mark will be recorded. When classes go off site during school time details must be recorded in the school office.

Absences should be requested in advance, all travel during school term time requires a meeting with the headteacher. Any unexplained immediate holidays to countries of prevalence will be explored further with the family.

We work closely with other agencies to promote, encourage and celebrate good attendance.

Children out of school for long periods with health needs

Occasionally, a child may have extended time out of school owing to ill health. The Class teacher / AHT will keep in touch with the young person and the family to support. A combination of family contact by phone, home or hospital visits, provision of relevant school work and virtual contact with school staff and pupils will be provided to support the pupil in order that they:

1. Retain contact with the school, their teachers and peers and
 2. They keep up to date with as much of their school work as possible, within the limitations of their illness.
- Support may include making referrals to relevant local authority services as appropriate.



Child Protection Concerns

If there are any Child Protection concerns these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps.

Attendance Plans

Where a pupil's attendance falls below 90% for non-illness related absences, the school will decide on the next step. This will usually be in the form of an initial contact by the Family Support Worker in the first instance.

Monitoring and evaluation

The DSL is responsible for monitoring attendance within school on a weekly basis and reporting concerns to the Headteacher. The Headteacher also responsible for monitoring overall attendance within the school and will report each term to the Governing Body. In our school, we monitor attendance on a daily, weekly, half-termly and termly basis.

We have a number of strategies in place to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistence absence. Some pupils have specific needs that can impact on their attendance, for instance, complex medical needs. We work with the local authority SEN team to this end. We aim to provide a quick and efficient response to non-attendance supporting Knowsley wider aims for higher attendance. In accordance with DfE guidance, Bluebell Park will follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not, and
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census

The flow chart below details the mechanisms in place to identify and act quickly on non-attendance.

Pupil does not come to school and parent contacts school to inform of reason → *office notified and register marked accordingly*

Pupil does not come to school and no reason given → *class to inform office and parent to be contacted by administrative team*

Contact established → *reason established and register marked accordingly. Seek advice from member of SMT if unsure*

No contact established → *emergency contact phoned*

Each case will be looked at on an individual basis and unexplained absences investigated. Keeping Children Safe in Education highlights the way that concerns can be escalated to Children's Social Care or the Police should it necessitate.

If a member of school staff has a concern about the welfare of a child then they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated. (School Attendance: Guidance for Schools, DfE). This can be done via the CPOMS system to contact the Safeguarding Lead.

The effectiveness of these procedures and that of any support mechanisms are evaluated through weekly Safeguarding meetings and regular meetings with the link Governor for Safeguarding, and scrutiny from the



reports brought to the Governing body.

Children Missing Education, DfE: [Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-in-education)

School Attendance: Guidance for Schools, DfE: [School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance-guidance-for-schools)

Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE: [Statutory guidance overview: Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

Attendance Review Protocol

Regular attendance at Bluebell Park ensures that pupils gain educational opportunities and supports their chance to make maximum progress.

When considering attendance, DfE “Children Missing in Education”, Knowsley Safeguarding Board “Children Who: Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care Strategy”, Knowsley Attendance Strategy and the most up to date Government guidance must be considered to ensure that we are active and relevant in our approach.

Bluebell Park is the initial point for data and intelligence gathering in relation to pupil attendance.

Interrogation of data including rigorous review of requests for authorised absence under exceptional circumstances is undertaken by the headteacher. Data retrieval and further analysis and follow with parents is undertaken each ½ term by the SMT who hold the detail behind each absence or can follow up with relevant staff and parents.

Children Missing from Education.

(refer to Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for further information)

A child missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect including exploitation. Local Authority guidance and procedures will be followed for dealing with a child who is missing from education, particularly on repeated occasions. The school will follow the pan-Merseyside missing children protocol. Unauthorised attendance will be closely monitored. The attendance of children with known welfare and attendance concerns will be monitored closely, particularly those with chronic poor attendance or persistent absentees. Schools should also scrutinise the attendance of off-site provision to ensure children are attending and are safe. Similarly, the attendance of children who are vulnerable or with known welfare and safeguarding concerns such as children who have a child protection plan, a child in need, are Children Looked After and/or SEN will be monitored on a daily and weekly basis.

The child’s social worker will be informed when there are unexplained absences or attendance concerns. It is important that the school’s attendance team, including the EWO, school nurse and Safer Schools Officer, are aware of any safeguarding concerns. It is critical that when a child is not attending school their welfare is confirmed and expected practice would be for an appropriate professional to visit the home and speak to the child alone, particularly if there are any safeguarding concerns. The school will seek to ensure it has at least two emergency contacts for each family and consider what urgent action it may need to take when a vulnerable child and family are not contactable and the child has not attended



Fixed penalty notices for absence (from Knowsley Council Education Penalty Notice Code of Conduct Absence and Exclusion).

Parents and pupils are supported at school and with local authority support to overcome barriers to regular attendance through a wide continuum of assessment and intervention strategies. Sanctions of any nature are for use only where parental co-operation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the problem. Sanctions are used as a means of enforcing attendance where it is likely their use will secure an improvement.

1.7 Irregular attendance from school may require pastoral support, monitoring or other sanctions rather than a Penalty Notice and following appropriate case work, the LA may instigate legal action if applicable,

1.8 If a parent has already been prosecuted and convicted under section 444 1A in the previous 12 months, it would be inappropriate to issue a Penalty Notice and casework would be more appropriate. To comply with human rights legislation, it is essential that Penalty Notices are issued in a consistent manner.

1.9 This Code of Conduct will govern the issuing of Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence from school and the failure to ensure an excluded child is not present in a public place without reasonable justification within the first five days of any exclusion period.

1.10 Penalty Notices will involve the recipient paying a fine of £120 within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Where an unauthorised absence has been dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice and it has been paid, it is not possible for a parent to be prosecuted for the same period of unauthorised absence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or for the same instance of an excluded child being present in a public place under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Bluebell Park—Attendance Response Procedures

WHO/WHAT

Class staff complete registers and return to the office by 9:30am
Any reasons for absences are noted on the relevant section of the form.
A message from the escort cannot be accepted.

WHEN

WHO/WHAT

FIRST DAY RESPONSE—Staff,
Office, Safeguarding Team,
Family Support Worker

Pupils on this list are determined by a number of factors including weekly analysis of attendance

Office will contact the parents of any pupils who we have not received the reason for absence for. Outcome to be noted. FSW will contact those from established list. Record response on CPOMS.

Office will complete a CPOMS referral for any pupils on the emergency immediate response list (held by office)

Information will be picked up by Safeguarding team for these instances

THREE DAY RESPONSE—staff,
Office, Safeguarding Team,
FSW

Any pupils who have three day unexplained absence, despite attempts to contact, office will complete CPOMS referral

WEEKLY RESPONSE—Office,
Safeguarding Teams,
Relevant persons

Weekly observation, analysis and actions needed completed by Safeguarding Team through CPOMS data

Stage 1 Letter—no reason for non-attendance following discussion with Safeguarding Lead
Stage 2 Letter—no response to first letter within reasonable timescale
Stage 3 Letter—Meeting with parents. Other actions dependant on situation.

HALF TERMLY—staff, Office,
Safeguarding Team

Half-termly analysis of data completed by Headteacher and Safeguarding Team

TERMLY—staff, Office, Safeguarding Team

Termly analysis of data completed by Headteacher and Safeguarding Team

Information shared with Governors on a regular basis. Information scrutinised by Governor responsible for attendance

ANNUAL—staff, Office, Safeguarding Team

Annual analysis of data completed by Headteacher and benchmarked against similar schools