



**Bexton Primary School**

*"Together we can make a difference"*

# **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

**Date of review: Autumn 2024**

**New review date: Autumn 2027**



**Cheshire Academies Trust**  
*Inspiring hearts and minds*

## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Fostering a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents/carers and pupils.
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- To provide support and guidance for parents/carers and pupils.

Every child of compulsory school age has the legal right to an efficient, full-time education that is suitable to their age, aptitude and any SEND they may have. Parents are legally required to make sure their child receives this education by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school.

The importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained at the Reception new intake induction meetings held in the summer term for children about to enter the Reception Class. This reiterates that parents/carers and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children particularly should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents/carers will be issued with a “Parent Handbook” when their children start school. A link to the Attendance and Punctuality Policy is included in this.

Each academic year, the school reminds parents/carers via the newsletter of the rules relating to requests for leave during term time, including details of the issuing of fixed penalty notices.

The Senior Leadership Team at Bexton will review attendance each half term and contact parents/carers if persistent attendance gives any cause for concern. At the end of the year, each child’s attendance and punctuality is reported to parents/carers on their child’s school report.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The Local Governing Board

The local governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## 3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

## 3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## 3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

## 3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff take calls from parents/carers/carers about absence and record it on the school system and highlight any concerns they may have regarding absence with the school attendance officer/headteacher.

# 4. Proactive approach

We believe that regular attendance is key to a pupil's educational success and overall well-being. We are committed to fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment where pupils are encouraged, enthused and supported to attend school consistently. To achieve this, we implement a range of proactive measures. We believe that encouraging regular attendance is about offering a rich, engaging experience that makes pupils excited to come to school. We aim to foster a holistic approach that integrates trips, visits, educational visitors, and special recognition opportunities to inspire pupils to attend regularly. These opportunities help children feel valued and connected to their learning environment and community.

## 4.1 Positive School Culture

We strive to create an engaging, inclusive, and supportive atmosphere that motivates pupils to attend school regularly. By offering a wide range of curricular and extracurricular activities, we ensure that every child feels valued and excited to participate in school life. Approaches such as Learning without Limits and OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning), aim to enhance our holistic curriculum and provision, ensuring school life at Bexton is engaging and rewarding; providing a safe and stimulating environment for all children to want to attend.

## 4.2 Early Communication with Parents

We maintain open and regular communication with parents and carers to reinforce the importance of school attendance. This includes:

- Providing clear information on attendance expectations during parent meetings, newsletters, and through our school website.
- Offering early intervention meetings with parents when attendance concerns arise, to discuss any barriers and agree on a plan of action.

### 4.3 Pastoral Support

We understand that various factors can impact a child's ability to attend school regularly. Our pastoral team works closely with pupils and families to identify and address any issues that may hinder attendance. This includes:

- Providing emotional and social support through in-house expertise.
- Referrals to external agencies if needed, such as family support workers or educational psychologists.
- Offering flexible support plans for children with medical or personal challenges that may affect their attendance.

### 4.4 Monitoring and Early Intervention

We have a robust system in place to monitor attendance closely. This allows us to:

- Identify patterns of absenteeism early.
- Contact families promptly when attendance falls below 95%.
- Track and action persistently absent pupils with attendance around 90%
- Arrange meetings with parents to explore ways to improve attendance before it becomes a significant issue.

### 4.5 Support for Returning Pupils

For pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence, whether due to illness, personal reasons, or holidays, we offer reintegration support. This includes:

- Developing tailored catch-up plans where appropriate or necessary.
- Providing academic and emotional support to help ease the transition back into school.

### 4.6 Holistic Offering

#### Educational Trips and Visits

We organise regular educational trips and visits to enrich our pupils' learning experience, providing hands-on, real-world applications of the curriculum. These excursions are closely tied to classroom topics, making school attendance essential for participation. We ensure:

- **Inclusive trips:** Trips are announced well in advance, encouraging consistent attendance in the lead-up to these exciting events.
- **Curricular relevance:** Children are encouraged to attend school regularly to fully prepare for trips that are integral to their learning.

#### Special Visitors and Workshops

We invite a variety of guest speakers, professionals, and workshop facilitators to visit the school and share their expertise with the pupils. These sessions are designed to motivate pupils and broaden their horizons:

- **Interactive learning:** Regular attendance ensures pupils don't miss out on these immersive experiences, which may include authors, scientists, or performers.
- **Pupil involvement:** Some visitors may engage pupils in interactive workshops, making attendance on these days especially rewarding.

#### Star of the Week and Achievement Awards

Our "Star of the Week" program recognises pupils for a wide range of positive behaviours, such as:

- **Effort and attitude:** Recognising pupils for their effort, improvement, kindness, or teamwork, which are equally celebrated alongside academic achievement.
- **Personal growth:** Children who show growth in personal skills, resilience, or leadership may also be highlighted in assemblies and receive postcards.

## Extracurricular Activities

We offer a wide range of extracurricular clubs and activities designed to inspire and motivate pupils, providing them with additional reasons to attend school regularly. These clubs offer creative, physical, and academic opportunities that encourage attendance by tapping into pupils' diverse interests and passions.

## School Assemblies and Performances

Regular attendance ensures that pupils can participate fully in whole-school activities. Pupils are encouraged to attend consistently so they can play an active role in class-led assemblies and special performances to the school and local community.

# 5. Recording attendance

## 5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Bexton Primary School uses an electronic registration system (SIMS) and the register is completed in the morning at 8.50am and in the afternoon at 1:15pm for Infant classes and 1:30pm for Junior classes. In the morning, doors are opened ten minutes early at 8.40am to encourage a prompt start to the day.

Any pupil will receive a late mark (L code) after 8.50am up to 9:15am. Any pupil arriving after 9:15am will be classified as late after the register has closed (U code). Parents/carers of pupils who show persistent lateness after the register has closed may be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

All pupils who are late must report to the office and are signed in on the SIMS system.

## 5.2 Unplanned absence

All parents/carers should contact Bexton Primary School **before 9 am** on each day that their child will be absent or late, either in person, email or by telephone. There is a dedicated answerphone on which messages can be left; these are entered on the computerised registration system with: Date, Child, Class, and Reason for Absence.

In the event of an absence due to illness (I code), specific details must be provided for whole school monitoring and safeguarding purposes. The School are unable to record the absence as an illness if sufficient details are not provided.

Failure to notify the school by 9am may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

All information is used for class registers. If no notification is received about a child's absence, the admin assistant will attempt to contact the parent/carers.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Parents/carers of pupils who show persistent unauthorised absence may be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority.

### **5.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

### **5.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the code (L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the code (U)

## **6. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **6.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers have no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time. The headteacher (or in her absence the deputy headteacher) will determine whether the exceptional circumstance ruling applies, if not the application will be declined.

Requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made in writing to the headteacher on the school's standard form (see appendix A). Parents/carers will be advised of the outcome of their request through return of a copy of the form with the request agreed or declined by the headteacher. A copy of this form will be retained in the school office in the school attendance file.

If the requested leave of absence is not authorised but taken by the parents/carers despite this, the school will mark the child as absent with a "G" code. The school may then follow the option of applying to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised

### **6.2 Fixed Penalty Notices**

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason.

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine

Schools must report to the Local Authority any child (of compulsory school age) who has had at least 10 sessions (5 full days) of unauthorised absence in an academic year. The school may report this as soon as an unauthorised leave of absence is taken, or through their half-termly reviews of pupil attendance.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 if not paid within 21 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period.

If a parent gets a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If parents do not pay the fine in 28 days they may be taken to court for keeping their child out of school.

If a child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years parents will not be fined but may be taken to court.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis. The following legal intervention options are available depending on the circumstances:

**Parenting contracts** – A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school (with the exception of independent schools and non-maintained special schools) or LA to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision.

**Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)** – ESOs give the LA a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parents to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education.

**Attendance prosecution** – Prosecution is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

**Parenting orders** – Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order.

**Fixed penalty notices** – Fixed penalty notices are served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

## 7. Monitoring Attendance

Bexton Primary School monitors pupil absence on a half termly basis.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the local governing board.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or more often if felt necessary.

Appendix 1: Exceptional Circumstance Form



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**REQUEST FOR LEAVE DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.

Regular attendance at school or alternative provision is a legal requirement and "The Education Act" 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, and parents have no entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time.

**PUPIL DETAILS**

**Name:** ..... **Date of Birth:** .....

**Class Teacher:** .....

**Dates of Requested Absence** .....

**Total Number of Days Requested** .....

**Please state precisely why this absence is to be taken during term time, bearing in mind the comments above.**

.....

.....

**Parent/Guardian Name:** .....

**Signature:** .....

*I understand that keeping my child off school for any longer than agreed by the school will result in Unauthorised Absence.*

**Head Teacher's Response**

**Authorised / Declined** .....( **Head Teacher**)

**Date:** .....



## Appendix 2: DfE Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day