

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Committee Ratifying Policy: FGB	Date of meeting: 6.5.26, email updates Sept 26
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	Name
Chair of Committee's Approval	
Chair of Governor's Approval	H Spurrier
Recommended Review Date:	Dec 28 unless updates

Ownership

Blisworth Community Primary School is a Local Authority School. It will be displayed on the policy list whether the policy is Local Authority adopted or school produced. The policy is issued by the Clerk to the Governors, to whom any change requests or queries should be directed by emailing admin@blisworth.northants.sch.uk

Version Control

This document is issued and maintained in accordance with Blisworth Community Primary School's procedures. Any change to the document will increase its version number. It is the responsibility of the reader to check with the Clerk that this is a currently valid copy.

Version	Date	Description of Change	Changed By
3		Update to fines in line with the new Statutory Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance, applicable from 19/8/24	Management Chair/Attendance Lead
4	Sept 26	LA required further wording to add about fines in line with West Northants new policy.	L Jenkins

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

Purpose of this policy

Blisworth School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. As part of this commitment, we recognise that for a child to achieve their full educational potential, a high level of school attendance is essential.

Good school attendance is one of the most important factors in achievement at school and we are committed to working with parents to help every child achieve their full potential.

The school recognises the clear links between attendance, attainment, children's enjoyment of school and our role in safeguarding children. Absences, especially if frequent or continuous can be damaging to a child's education and reasons for non-school attendance need to very clearly given. We will consistently work towards very high standards of attendance for all children.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) from the Department for Education (DfE) (applies from 19th August 2024) 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.

School times

The school will be open to pupils for 190 days per year. Parents will be supplied with a list of term dates at least once during the preceding school year. These are available on the school and West Northamptonshire County Council websites.

Morning	Afternoon
8.55am – 12.00pm	KS1 – 1.00pm – 3.25pm KS2 - 1.00pm – 3.30pm

The gates are open from 8.45am and children should come straight into their classrooms at this time. For health and safety reasons, it is important that pupils do not arrive

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

significantly before this time, especially the younger pupils/ those unsupervised. The school will contact parents of children who arrive persistently too early this time.

Attendance Register

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keep an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (for pupils of compulsory school age)
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive at school by 8:55am on each school day with a strong preference to arriving at 8:45 to start learning.

The register will be taken in the morning at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9:25am. The afternoon register will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

Procedures for late arrivals

Parents are asked to contact the school if they know that their child will be late for school due to a medical appointment or other good reason. If the school has not been advised that a child will be late then the session will be marked as an ‘unauthorised absence’. A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a child is persistently late, a letter will be sent to parents indicating the number of times a child has been late and to confirm that their punctuality will be monitored. (Appendix 1)

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded accurately using the correct code. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, staff will make efforts to contact parents to establish the reason. Should this not be possible, absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

If parents/carers take their child on an unauthorised holiday, this will lead to the child's absence being recorded as unauthorised and will be included on their school report and also in the school register which is monitored by the Local Education Authority who may decide to take further action. Parents should be aware that schools have no discretion to authorise family holidays in term time.

Blisworth School will challenge parents to clarify the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Headteacher.

If parents/carers do not inform the school when they move, emigrate, decide to return late from a family holiday, elect to home educate or privately educate, then the child will be regarded as a 'Child Missing from Education'. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the child's address and if necessary, contact the police.

Children who are regularly absent from school will be monitored carefully for patterns of absence and for reasons given. The term "Persistent Absence" is used when a pupil misses 10% or more of school. If the school becomes concerned about a child's level of absence we will:

- Speak with families to see what support could help improve attendance and understand what the barriers are where possible.
- Send a letter to parents indicating a child's level of attendance and to confirm the school will monitor future attendance for a period of time. (See Appendix 2)
- If attendance does not significantly improve, a second letter will be sent to parents to request that any future absences are covered with medical evidence in order for them to be authorised. (See Appendix 3)
- If a child's absences still remain a concern, a third letter will be sent out inviting parents to a Parent Contract meeting. (See Appendix 4)

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

Responsibilities of parents

It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure children receive an appropriate and full-time education. Blisworth School expects that parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly and on time.
- ensure that their child attends for at least 95% of the time aspiring to 100% unless there is a medically diagnosed health need known to school and shared by the family which directly impacts on a pupil's ability to attend school.
- notify the school on the first day of absence by telephoning, emailing or using the absence-reporting function on ParentMail, preferably before 9am and on each subsequent day of absence.
- provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for authorised absence to a minimum
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school

Responsibilities of pupils

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or the Headteacher.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late. They should inform the school office before going into the classroom.

Children should make sure they know which adult is collecting them/arrangements for the end of the school day.

Responsibilities of the school

All staff (teaching and support) at Blisworth School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.

The Headteacher leads and champions attendance and will oversee, direct and coordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance. They will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that attendance is a standing item in the Headteacher's report to governors. The Headteacher will notify parents if we have a concern regarding a child's absence to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Responsibilities of Governors

- The Headteacher will report concerns relating to attendance to the full Governing body.
- The Governing body is aware of the attendance profile of Blisworth School and any actions that are being taken to improve it.
- The Governing body will monitor the patterns and trends of reasons for absence and be aware of any impact on the whole school and pupils' achievement.
- The Governing Body will ensure Blisworth School has an action plan for every pupil whose attendance is causing concern.

School Attendance Support Officer

The school has an allocated School Attendance Support Officer (SASO) from West Northamptonshire Council. The Headteacher meets with the SASO termly to provide support for any attendance issues.

Requests for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be "exceptional circumstances", such as:

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a pupil is to participate in a specialist educational experience (e.g. a music school, unique sporting activity)
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's /student's parents belong, or other exceptional cultural requirements
- the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority
- the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, he/she has

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months

- a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered
- in other exceptional circumstances connected with family relationships (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Except in the case of similar circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent or carer
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday

The final decision whether to authorise an absence rests with the headteacher.

Holidays in term time

On 1st September 2013, a law was introduced by the government which gives **no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time**. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances as described above. Headteachers are not expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without the consent of the school. The Local Authority will be monitoring all school absences during term time and challenging schools and parents who do not adhere to the new legislation. Please see **Regulation 14 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007** ([Code of Conduct for administering Penalty Notices \(School non-attendance\) | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#))

If you take your child out of school for an cumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) over a period of 10 weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local Authority, in line with West Northamptonshire's requirements, for consideration of legal action.

This could include:

- a Penalty Notice payable a fine of up to £160
- prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

- prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment

As described above, parents wishing to request authorised absence must complete the appropriate form available in the school office, giving dates and stating the exceptional circumstance which makes the absence necessary. This must be received by the school at least four weeks before the absence commences unless the event is an emergency or something unforeseeable (e.g. – sudden bereavement). The Headteacher will then make a decision based on the exceptional criteria. All requests will be considered on an individual basis and any request authorised for another pupil or granted on a previous occasion cannot be treated as a precedent. Absences, both authorised and unauthorised will be recorded on the child's Annual Report to Parents.

If parents decide to take a child on holiday, and the absence request has not been authorised, they will receive an unauthorised mark in the attendance register for the period they are away from school. Parents should be aware that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice. West Northamptonshire Council's criteria for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised term time absence is five days. Therefore, any unauthorised absence of five days (10 sessions) or more in a rolling period of 10 weeks may result in the County Council issuing a fixed penalty notice of £80 per parent, per child. This could then increase to £160 if the penalty notice is not paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160, if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those three years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include consideration of prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

The threshold for this can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence. For example, four sessions in term time plus six instances of arriving late. The period of 10 weeks may also span different terms or school years. West Northamptonshire Council retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This could include where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events.

Notices to Improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by parents, or have not worked, a Notice to Improve may be sent to give parents a final opportunity to engage with support.

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

Procedure to be followed when a child is ill

- If a pupil is ill, the parent/carer should notify the school by telephone. Parentmail or e-mail (admin@blisworth.northants.sch.uk) on the first day of absence as early as possible and preferably, before 9:00am giving the reason.
- If a pupil is ill for a second day then the parent/carer needs to contact the school again.
- Following NHS advice, if a pupil has sickness and/or diarrhoea, they should stay away from school for 48 hours after their symptoms have gone.
- If the parent/carer knows the pupil will be absent for several days, the school should be informed the time-period and no further calls will be needed. However, school will contact you periodically to check on the welfare of your child. Please respond to these calls as if we cannot contact you we may need to make further investigations to ensure your child is safe.
- If a pupil is ill beyond the time-period given, the school should be contacted otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If a pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand) then the parent/carer should notify the school in advance by telephone or e-mail

Arrangements for dropping off and collecting children from the school

On admission to the school, parents provide accurate information about who holds parental responsibility for their children i.e. names, addresses, telephone numbers and information for emergency contact persons.

Children in **Reception and Y1, Y2 and Y3** will be dropped at the beginning, and collected by parents/carers at the end of the school day. Children will be brought out onto the school playground by the class teacher. Parents will ensure that their child's class teacher is fully notified as to who will pick up/drop off children and give information if anyone other than the primary parent/carer is to pick up their child from school. In emergencies, the school office can be contacted and we will let your child's class teacher know.

Children in Y4, Y5 and Y6: children can be dropped off/collected by parents as above, notifying the school of any changes. If you wish your child to walk to and from school on their own, then the school requires that you provide written permission.

Parents should ensure that their children know which adult is collecting them, or whether, where appropriate, they are walking home, or for example, attending an after-school club. If a child is collected by a parent or other approved adult, between the hours of 8.55am and

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

3.30pm then the adult should report to the school office so that the child can be collected and signed out.

Protocols when children are not collected

- If any child is not collected from school within 15 minutes after the end of the day, the Headteacher or class teacher will telephone the parents/carers.
- If there is no response, emergency contacts will then be telephoned.
- If, after 60 minutes, it has not been possible to contact parents/carers or emergency contacts then the local police will be contacted; the
- Headteacher will also contact the referral team of the local social services office to inform them of a possible concern
- Police will liaise with social services and the school to make arrangements for someone to collect and care for the child. Detailed, timed records of the action taken and calls made by the Headteacher/teacher will be kept. Consideration should be given to notifying the social services to investigate the circumstances under child protection or child welfare procedures/services.

Promoting attendance

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Northamptonshire attendance targets. The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education, as stated in the Home/School agreement. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving set goals.

Good school attendance will be promoted in a range of ways to the pupils including assemblies that note the importance of high attendance during wider themes.

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absence may be a cause for concern

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

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- Provide regular attendance reports to school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Appendix 1 : Letter regarding punctuality

Dear Parents/Carers

We are writing to inform you that (child's name) has been late on xxxxx occasions this term, and they have missed xxxxxx minutes of learning time.

We do appreciate that slow traffic and other factors can contribute to children being late for school but please be aware that it can be distressing and disruptive for children when they are late.

Could we therefore remind you of the importance of punctual attendance at school and request that you ensure your child arrives at school on time in the future.

Gates open at 8.45am and the register is taken between 8.55am and 9am.

Appendix 2 : Absence Monitoring Letter

Dear Parents/Carers

We are writing to express concern at (child's name) levels of absence from school.

Whilst we acknowledge that children become ill, (child's name) current attendance has fallen to ----%. This is likely to have an impact on his/her academic achievement.

As a result of (child's name) attendance percentage, we must initiate our monitoring procedures. If (child's name) attendance does not significantly improve within the next six school weeks, we may need you to provide medical evidence for any future absences to be authorised.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice if your child has more than five days unauthorised absences within a six-week period.

Policy No	Blisworth Community Primary School
Version No 4	(Attendance Policy)

In the meantime, if there is anything you wish to discuss, please contact us as we may be able to help with any issues you may be having with getting (child's name) to school.

Appendix 3 : 2nd Absence Monitoring Letter

Dear Parents/Carers,

Following our previous letter sent on (date), we are disappointed to say that there has not been any significant improvement in (child's name) attendance.

Our records show that (child's name) current attendance is %.

Any future absences may need to be covered with medical evidence to be authorised.

Evidence such as an appointment card, notification of an appointment on a phone or a copy of a prescription are sufficient.

Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice if your child has more than five days unauthorised absences within a ten-week period.

We will continue to monitor (child's name) attendance and if there is no significant improvement, we will contact you further to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can support you in improving (child's name) attendance.

Appendix 4 : 3rd Absence Monitoring Letter

Dear Parents/Carers,

Further to our letter dated _____ we are disappointed to say that there has still not been any significant improvement in (child's name) attendance.

Our records show that (child's name) current attendance is %.

As detailed in our previous letter, we would like to invite you to a meeting on _____ at _____. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss how we can work together to improve (child's name) attendance and set supportive targets.

We look forward to hearing from you.