Bisham CofE Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Signature: ___Jane Foster________________

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BISHAM COFE PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY

CONTENTS

1  INTRODUCTION
2  DEFINITIONS
3  PUNCTUALITY
4  CHILD BEING ABSENT: PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY
5  CHILD BEING ABSENT: SCHOOL’S RESPONSIBILITY
6  LEAVE OF ABSENCE
7  REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES
8  REWARDS
9  MONITORING AND REVIEW
1. **Introduction**

At Bisham CofE Primary School we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance. As a school we strive to support families and pupils to encourage and promote excellent attendance.

Attendance and attendance patterns are systematically monitored and followed up in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy. However, permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/guardian.

Under the Education (pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are absent at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day.

The register will be coded to indicate authorised or unauthorised absences.

Each year, ‘Attendance Targets’ are set for the whole school and across the Borough.

These targets are based on previous results and inspections with the aim of improving attendance. The Local Authority is involved in helping to ensure school targets are met both within the school and locally across the Borough.

The target for Bisham CofE Primary School for the academic year 2014 - 2015 is 96.1% in line with the national average.

2. **Definitions:**

2.1 **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence and it is considered the reason is an appropriate and valid reason for the child to be kept off school.

On occasion unavoidable causes can be considered as valid; however, parents/guardians must notify school of circumstances.

2.2 **Unauthorised Absence**

This is when the absence is without good reason and without the permission of parent/guardian and / or school. For example: a child maybe away without good reason supported by the parent/guardian but NOT the school.

The school has the right to code an absence they feel is due to unreasonable grounds as UNAUTHORISED.

Examples include: Absences which are unexplained, parents keeping children off when it is avoidable, truancy before/during the school day, late arrival after the register closes and leave for holiday.
3. **Punctuality**

Registration is at 8.45 am

Children are expected to arrive at school between 8.30 and 8.45 am. The school gate closes at 8.50 am. Any pupil arriving after 8.50 am will be considered as late and must register in the office.

A number of lates will result in a meeting between staff and the parent.

4. **Child being absent: Parental responsibility**

A parent /guardian MUST ring or contact school office staff on the first morning of absence with a reason and when the child is expected to return. If the illness is prolonged, it is important to keep school informed. Under special circumstances, school can liaise with home to ensure the child receives some school work to keep up to date.

NB It is advisable to arrange Doctor/Dentist appointments out of school hours, however, if it is unavoidable, please let the office staff know so they can ensure the absence is authorised and correctly coded.

5. **Child being absent: School’s Responsibility**

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the Class Teacher will record the absence as in the register as unauthorised.

The office will ring the child’s home before 9.30am where there is an unexplained absence e.g the child is absent from school and no explanation has been given.

6. **Leave of Absence**

There is no entitlement to time off in term time.

**Leave of absence during term time is no longer permitted**, however, under extenuating circumstances it can be permitted ONLY under very exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Head teacher. Parent’s/Guardians MUST complete a "Leave of Absence" form at least one month in advance, requesting time off and fully explaining the circumstances with PLANNED dates of the journey. The Head teacher will return his/her decision in writing usually within a few days.

Absence/s taken which are not authorised could be liable for:

A fixed penalty notice issued by the Local Authority - Recently revised by Government and Local Authority September 2013. Amendments to the 2007 Penalty Notice Regulations have reduced the timescale for paying a penalty notice.

Fines must now be paid as £60 per parent per child within 21 days or £120 per parent/per child within 28 days. The Local Authority have revised the threshold when penalty notices can be issued, whereby a fine will now be issued if a child has accumulated 5 days of unauthorised absence in a 12 week period. For unauthorised holiday leave no warning is required.

(Failure to pay a fixed penalty notice will lead to legal action)

7. **Repeated Unauthorised Absences**

If a child presents with a number of unauthorised absences, parents/guardians will in the first instance be asked to visit school to meet with the Class Teacher, Headteacher or Education Welfare Officer to discuss ways of reducing the absences. If the situation does not improve the Education Welfare Officer will receive a referral from the Attendance Team and a letter will be sent home by the LA Attendance Officer. Should absences continue the LA Attendance Officer will meet with the parent/guardian and an agreement signed with targets to help improve attendance. However, if the targets are not met, this may result in further meetings and eventually legal action against the parent/guardian. This will be seen
as a failure to accept responsibility for sending their child to school on a regular basis.

8. **Rewards**

8.1 **Termly**

Certificates are awarded for 100% attendance and improved attendance to celebrate and encourage attendance.

8.3 **Yearly**

100% attendance /improved attendance certificates are given out with prizes for the 100% attenders at the End of Year assembly.

Yearly Reports will show the child’s attendance. 99% and above is excellent, 95% and above is Good, 90%-94% satisfactory, less than 90% poor, and 85% and less is very poor.

9. **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the Governors and the Headteacher to monitor overall attendance. Regular reports will be requested by the Governing Body to ensure they are kept informed of progress.

Where there are changes in legislation, local procedures or school procedures, the School Attendance Officer will inform parents/guardians of changes.

School Staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible which in turn ensures a good education for their child.