

The Bourne Partnership

Attendance Policy Shipbourne School

Signed Executive Headteacher	Date 13 th September 2023
Signed Head of School	Date for Review 20 th September 2024

Staff Lead for Attendance: Terri Daters (Head of School)

Statement of Intent

The Bourne Partnership is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all pupils. Regular attendance is critical if pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of the Partnerships basic principles is to celebrate success and personal achievement. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. Within the Partnership, we actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils, using a variety of termly and annual incentives.

The Governors, Heads of School and Staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance within The Bourne Partnership.

Local Authority attendance support services

Local Authority Attendance Specialists work strategically by offering support to schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school will consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and can put pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that every child is safe.

At Shipbourne School, pupils are expected to arrive by 8:45 am. All pupils that arrive late (after 8.50 am) must report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness will be recorded. The day finishes at 3.15pm for all pupils and early finishes should only be requested in exceptional circumstances. If refused but still taken, this will be entered as an unauthorised absence.

The Role of the School Staff

The Head of School, Terri Daters, has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils

present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the School Secretary of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the School Secretary to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed termly of child's attendance figure

Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

At Shipbourne Primary School:

- 95 - 90% attendance - monitored by Head of School
- Below 90% - Letter to parents requesting meeting. All further absences to be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence to support absence.
- If situation does not improve, Head of School to advise Attendance Service of child's attendance and consider Attendance Service or Penalty Notice where the absences have not been authorised.

Please refer to Annex A for guidance on what work should be undertaken by the school prior to referral.

Children Missing Education

Our Child Protection Policy will guide response and action taken whenever a child is missing education, with consultation with the Safeguarding Service and Attendance Service where required. No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head of School and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance should be followed.

Lateness

At Shipbourne School, the attendance register is taken in class at 8:45am – 8.50am and 1:15pm – 1:20 pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9:10 am and 1:30 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents by the attendance officer and the Head of School or member of the Senior Leadership Team and may be referred to the Attendance Service. Persistent lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

Authorising Absence

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that a child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- for religious observance
- due to failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head of School, on behalf of the Governing Board (Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006), may also authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances”, but this must be requested in advance, in writing, and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head of School. Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head of School’s decision is final. Any absence must be unavoidable with best endeavours made to rearrange. The Head of School is not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified in writing. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Issues with transport

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Head of School’s ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday, whatever the reasons for taking it. If the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parents for each child taken out of school.

Monitoring and Intervention

The school will maintain a consistent approach to monitoring absence and lateness, with records viewed by the School Secretary, Head of School and/or DSLs at least weekly. SIMS and safeguard.software will be used to track patterns and record all monitoring and actions, identifying persistently absent pupil and those at risk of becoming persistently absent. If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored daily and weekly. We also combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

School Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term, the school will consult with the Attendance Service.

Head of School and Attendance Service recommended actions may include:

- Monitoring
- Referral letter
- In-school Parent meetings (to offer support e.g. via Early Help)
- Home visits
- Potential raising of penalties

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed in a term may lead to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, the Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

- **Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.**
- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be paid within 28 days, and reduced if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in

prosecution by the Local Authority under the provisions of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or prosecution under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006..

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Leave

- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct
- Attendance Service receives a request to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of 10 or more school sessions (5days)
- Attendance Service issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parents per child)
- If a Penalty Notice(s) is/are not paid within 28 days of issue, Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving Shipbourne School, other than at the end of year 2 or 6, parents/carers are required to inform the school office in writing. The parent /carer must provide the school with the following information:

- child's name,
- date of leaving,
- new home address (if applicable),
- name and address of new school.

This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day.

All school staff and the Governing Board are committed to working with parents and pupils as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance at our school as possible. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and when local or government policy is updated.

Annex A: DfE guidance Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance.

All Pupils

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that that the school is best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Persistently absent pupils (90% attendance or below)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including and parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p>

Severely absent pupils (50% or below)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

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:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special education need, educational psychologists and mental health services to ensure joined up support for families.</p> <p>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.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.</p> <p>Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.</p> <p>Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.</p>

Appendix 1 Leave of absence refusal letter

Appendix 2 Traveller Absence

Appendix 3 Traveller Absence

Appendix 4 Excessive late letter 'L'

Appendix 5 Excessive late letter 'U'

Appendix 6 Excessive absence letter

Appendix 6 Meeting letter

Appendix 8 Penalty Notice information

Appendix 9 Penalty Notice Warning Letter

KCC Attendance Service referral pathway:

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extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.kelsi.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/62161/Kent-School-Referral-Pathway-Pupil-Attendance.pdf

Appendix 1

Dear «Name»

Request for leave during Term-Time ((Child's Name))

I have received your request to take ((Name)) out of school for a family holiday between ((Date)) and ((Date)), a total of ((number)) school sessions.

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Head of School's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will **not** be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

The School's Attendance Policy confirms that:

1. agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing body
2. each case will be judged on its merits
3. my decision is final
4. leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have carefully considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take ((name)) out of school I will make a request for a Penalty Notice.

Or

You failed to apply in advance for permission for ((name)) to be absent from school. As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent** of **each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £XXX to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £XX if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

Appendix 2

Dear ((Name))

Traveller Absence

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times ((name)) has been absent from school. Since ((Date)), Name has missed ((Number)) half day sessions achieving an overall attendance rate of ((number)) %.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Attendance Service if ((Name)) 's attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If ((Name)) attendance does not improve and a referral is made to the Attendance Service, you could be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court unless you can prove that:

1. the child has no fixed abode
2. because of the nature of your trade or business (work) you have to travel from place to place and your child has attended school as often as possible
3. your child has attended for at least 200 sessions in the past 12 months (for children aged 6 years and over)

If you would like to speak to me about ((name))'s attendance. Please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

Appendix 3

Dear ((Name))

Thank you for contacting me to say that ((name)) will be absent from school from ((Date)) as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise ((Name))'s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However, you have not let me know when ((Name)) is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 school days to confirm a date, I will refer ((Name)) to the Local Authority as a child Missing in Education.

After 20 days absence, the Local Authority will give permission to take ((Name))'s name off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Your sincerely

Head of School

Appendix 4

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has been late to school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late.

At «Name» school the register is taken at «Time» am and at «Time» pm.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing for them.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us. Should «Name»'s punctuality however continue to be a cause for concern I will need to inform the school's Education Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

Appendix 5

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has arrived after the register has been closed. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was late. (code U)

At «Name» school the register is taken at «Time» am and is closed at «Time» am for the morning session and taken again at «Time» pm and closed at «Time» pm for the afternoon session. Pupils that arrive after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral to a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Education Welfare Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School

Appendix 6

Dear «Name»

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that «Name» has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days «Name» was absent.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve «Name»'s attendance. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

Appendix 7

Dear (Name)

Re: (Pupil's Name)

Despite previous attempts to advise you, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. (Pupil's name)'s attendance at school is currently (%). This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in (pupil's name)'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness will require medical evidence. If medical evidence is not provided, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for at It is imperative that you and attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by

.....

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me on «Telephone number» so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and 's absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the Attendance Service.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Head of School
The School

Appendix 8

Dear Parent/Carer

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

From February 2005, **Kent Local Authority (LA)** introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.

As you can see from the above we take this opportunity to remind parents (in a nonthreatening way) the expectations placed upon schools from now on. Please therefore continue to read the letter and we appreciate your support in this initiative.

The following circumstances will be considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing Penalty Notices:

- Truancy including truancy sweeps
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Holidays in term time
- Delayed return from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

At The Bourne Partnership we consider attendance and these new legal powers very important, this is why we are bringing this to your attention.

Please ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 SECTION 23 PENALTY NOTICE FOR
UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE £60 PENALTY IF PAID
WITHIN 28 DAYS £120 PENALTY IF PAID AFTER 28 DAYS BUT
WITHIN 42 DAYS

Appendix 9

Dear

Re (Child's Name)

At The Bourne Partnership we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that **(Child's name)** has been absent from school for a total of () unauthorised sessions (**days**). In this regard I refer you to legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

'As from April 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) in a current term.'
A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent and for each child.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

Please note this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached in a current term.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact
..... on

Yours sincerely

Head of School