



# Nexus Education Schools Trust

## Attendance Policy

### Bickley Primary School

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**Non-Statutory**

	Name	Date
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# Attendance Policy

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## 1. Aims

At Nexus Education Schools Trust we believe that good attendance and punctuality is essential for our children to gain the educational and social skills for their future. Bickley Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. We have set a target of 97% for the whole school's attendance.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 3. School procedures

#### 3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

Please inform the school office on 0208 460 6790 if your child will not be in school that day for any reason. The office staff will aim to contact a parent or carer if a child is not registered by 9.30am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.10pm

#### 3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

- Please telephone between 8am and 9.30am on 0208 460 6790 or you can send an e-mail to [admin.office@bickley.bromley.sch.uk](mailto:admin.office@bickley.bromley.sch.uk) or leave a message on Parentmail

- If the school has had no explanation for absence, then we will telephone on the first day of absence asking the parent/carer to provide a reason. If no reason is given for the absence, then it will be marked as unauthorised.
- We need to know why your child is not in school on the first day of absence to ensure that they are safe and to authorise the absence. Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 or carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

If it is necessary to take your child out of school for a medical appointment written evidence of the appointment should be shown to the office at least a day in advance.

When taking children out of school during the day parents/carers should report to the office. Children must be signed out/in when they leave/return to school during the school day for reasons of safety.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

Registers close at 9.20am. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on-site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

Lateness is monitored by the Headteacher Miss Blake and Mrs Peirce the Attendance Officer. If your child is late more than 5 times in any half term period, you will be contacted to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher to find ways to resolve the problem.

### **3.5 Following up absence**

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The office staff will aim to call home if a child is not registered by 9.30am. If we cannot make contact with a parent/carer by 12.00pm then the child may be reported to the local authority as missing in education.

### 3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will keep parents and carers updated as to their child's attendance and punctuality. Information regarding attendance may be included in newsletters so that parents and carers are aware of the school's target and the progress towards this.

Attendance is reviewed regularly with letters sent or meetings arranged with parents and carers where attendance is not on track.

## Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

All applications for leave must be made a minimum of 15 days in advance.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (that cannot be made out of school hours) – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- Performing rights, eg theatre productions although you must complete the relevant "child performers" paperwork from the local authority and will receive a maximum number of 10 days in any academic year.
- Examinations for dance, music, etc. when they can't be arranged out of school hours.
- Family bereavement.

Examples of **unauthorised absence** include:

- Holidays
- Day trips or long weekends.
- Visits to families living abroad.
- Illness of parent.
- Birthday celebration.
- Visits to families working abroad.
- Holidays booked due to difficulties with work shift patterns or rotas.
- Surprise visits or one booked without knowledge.

Leave of absence during term time may be granted in the event of a medical emergency only. In this eventuality, details of flights or travel arrangements and when they were booked may be required before authorised absence is granted. This does not include a planned trip to coincide with cheaper flight times during term time, for example, to visit a poorly relative.

## 4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Certificates are awarded termly to children with 100% and 99%+ attendance. Attendance is regularly celebrated through newsletters and assemblies. A celebration is held for those children who have 100% attendance over the course of a year.

Good attendance is promoted through meetings with families and letters as and when needed.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence daily. The Attendance Officer reports regularly to the Headteacher on attendance and will investigate where there are patterns of absence and lateness. Attendance under 93% is reviewed termly.

Parents and carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents and carers are expected to update the school regularly as to when their child may be well enough to return to school.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents/carers to discuss the reasons for this and you will be required to provide medical evidence relating to their absence. This can be in the form of a copy of the appointment, doctor's certificate or proof of medication.

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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 is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with the Local Committee.

Attendance data is stored on the school's management information system with hard copies of data only being printed as a hard copy to support termly monitoring or a meeting with a parent or carer. Regular overall attendance reports are printed by the Attendance Officer to support monitoring.

## 7. Roles and responsibilities

### 7.1 The Local Committee

The Local Committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. The Local Committee reports back to Nexus Education Schools Trust (NEST) board on a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## **7.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Local Committee Members via the termly Headteacher's Report.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and works with the local authority to fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

## **7.3 The attendance officer**

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and 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 to discuss attendance issues.

## **7.4 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 according to school timings and procedures. The Headteacher has overall responsibility in compliance of the system.

## **7.5 Office staff**

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every three years by NEST. At every review, the policy will be shared with all NEST Headteachers.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to the NEST Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## Appendix 1: 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
M	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

## Appendix 2: Absence Request Form

### Notes to parents/carers

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance and must be for **exceptional circumstances**. If you do not have Parental Responsibility and/or normally live with the child you must seek the consent of the parent/carer who does and that person should complete this form. Schools will only consider request from that parent/carer and absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will only consider:

- The reason for the leave
- The time and duration of the leave
- Whether or not the leave could have been taken during the statutory school holiday periods
- Your child's record of attendance
- **Learning that will be missed. It is not possible to send work away with the child.**

**WARNING: IF THE SCHOOL REFUSES YOUR REQUEST AND THE CHILD IS STILL TAKEN OUT OF SCHOOL, THIS WILL BE RECORDED AS AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE AND MAY MAKE YOU LIABLE TO A £60/£120 FINE.**

To the Headteacher:

I wish to apply for:

Name(s) of Child(ren) ..... DOB..... Class.....  
 ..... DOB..... Class.....

to be authorised as being absent from school from ..... to ..... inclusive

**Reason for request for absence during term time:**

**If this is a holiday request, please explain the exceptional circumstances which mean that the holiday cannot be taken during a school holiday:**

Signature of Parent/Carer ..... Date .....

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL

- Authorised .....School agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.
- Absence dates \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_
- Unauthorised .....School does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason(s):

<b>Learning that will be missed</b>		<b>No Exceptional Circumstances</b>	
<b>The time and duration of the leave</b>		<b>Leave could have been taken during school holiday periods</b>	
<b>Current attendance %</b>			

Signed by Headteacher ..... Date .....

**Please read overleaf**

## Holidays in term time

**Important:** please read carefully the information below.

**Warning:** If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a £60/£120 Penalty fine, per parent, per child.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by, whenever possible, taking your holidays during school holidays.

### The Facts

We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents/carers may ask for term time leave for their child/ren. However, it is important that parents/carers carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.

Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the work they have missed.

Children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as **unauthorised absence** and may lead to a **£60/£120 fine per parent, per child**.

### The Law

The law does not say that parents/carers have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.

However, in **exceptional circumstances** school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. The request for leave must come from a parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.

If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.

If the child is away from school for a total of 4 weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll and inform the local authority unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent/carer to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on the 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances.

#### Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstance, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents where the school is informed beforehand

#### Other absence from school will not be authorised:

- For any type of shopping
- Looking after siblings or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives
- Because holidays are cheaper in term time
- More than one day for a family wedding

Please contact your child's Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

**The law requires schools to be open for 190 days each year, and every day is important. Please help them not to miss this valuable time.**

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to take holidays during term time.