Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Approval Date: June 2026

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Headteacher: ……

THREE BRIDGES PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Vision

At Three Bridges Primary School we aim to educate the whole child and to ensure children are happy, healthy and fulfil their potential in terms of development of skills for life, social and moral values and academic success. To enable children to achieve all that they are capable of, it is essential that they attend regularly and punctually.

Values

Learn Enjoy Achieve Respect Nurture Engage & Resilience

Rules



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2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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

It also refers to:

School census guidance
Keeping Children Safe in Education
Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Government expects:

Schools and local authorities

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Attendance Officer

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

School Office Staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Check the answerphone, emails & Studybugs for any messages left by the parent/carer regarding their child's absence from school.
- Identify patterns in absence and record this on CPOMS, alerting the attendance office.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Report an absence - parents can telephone the school office on 01293 524076 *option 1* and leave a message on the school answer machine, before 9:00am, or leave a message on the Studybugs app.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Liaise with the school on barriers to attendance.

4. Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

Lower Site

The register will be taken at 8.40am - after this time your child will be registered as late. The register closes at 9.10am - after this time your child will be registered as unauthorised late.

Upper Site

The register will be taken at 8.50am - after this time your child will be registered as late. The register closes at 9.20am - after this time your child will be registered as unauthorised late.

The afternoon register is taken at 1pm on the Lower Site and 1.15pm on the Upper Site.

Pupils are marked as:

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

The register is taken on Bromcom so it is saved directly to the central school data management system, ensuring that office staff can monitor the attendance of pupils quickly and address any missing marks for pupils.

National codes are used to record attendance and absence in a consistent way.

Unplanned Absence

Parents 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.

To report an absence, parents can telephone the school office on 01293 524076 *option 1* and leave a message on the school answer machine before 9:00am or leave a message on the Studybugs app. 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. The school will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested could include:

- Attendance is less than 90%.
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

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

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, parents/carers are encouraged 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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Following up Unexplained Absence

If any pupil who is expected to be in school does not attend - or stops attending - without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will send a first day absence text, requesting the parent/carer contact the school with a reason for their child's absence, within 15-minutes or a home visit will be carried out.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will contact Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team, where a referral could be made.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels by:

- Sending a termly attendance statement
- Attaching an attendance certificate to the annual report
- Monitoring children's attendance that falls below 90%
- Sharing attendance during Termly Learning Conferences (TLCs)

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence.

The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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
- Funeral of an immediate relative
- Close family wedding
- Part-time children (approved by the Senior Leadership Team)

Legal Sanctions

The school or Local Authority 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 fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. 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 consider:

- 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 a suspended or 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.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Three Bridges Primary School recognises good attendance through:

- Celebrating good attendance in our weekly Celebration Assembly
- Celebrating class attendance in our monthly newsletter
- Headteacher and Attendance Officer will coordinate parent/carer meetings
- Termly attendance letters are sent to parents/carers
- The attendance officer will contact families to celebrate improvements in attendance

7. Attendance Monitoring

A monthly attendance review takes place between the Headteacher and the Attendance Officer. Actions are agreed for all identified pupils.

The School:

- Reviews all pupils through the Attendance Review Process and undertakes individual agreed actions
- Analyses attendance and absence data termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level, reporting this to governors.
- Identifies whether or not there are particular groups of children or individuals whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected via Bromcom 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 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 and challenge to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- The attendance officer will meet regularly (at least monthly) to discuss the attendance analysis.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, school leaders and Governors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families: Name of child; Group(s) they identify with; Barrier to attendance; Agree next steps
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

During Attendance Review meetings, pupils whose attendance has dropped below 95% are reviewed and the context to each pupil is discussed. Unless in exceptional circumstances, when a pupil's attendance has dropped below 90% the process of challenging this absence starts.

The process will follow, but not adhere to, the following structure:

1. Phone call from the attendance officer to review attendance: highlights, barriers, and next steps (notice to improve). A period of 2-weeks will be allocated for the improvement.
2. Notice to improve letter issued if attendance drops below 90% or there is no improvement from step 1. A period of 2-weeks will be allocated for the improvement.

3. Phone call from the attendance officer to celebrate improvement. Or, an invitation to meet with the DHT (Deputy Headteacher) if attendance does not improve/ continues to decline.
4. Attendance will be monitored for a further 4-weeks. Improvements will be celebrated with the attendance officer or DHT. If attendance does not improve/ continues to decline a referral will be made for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) by the attendance officer.
5. All correspondence between school and home will be logged on CPOMS.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the Local Authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, at the start of every academic year by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Full Governing Board.

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
Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Suspended	Pupil has been suspended 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
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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

Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

9. Communication with Parents and Carers about Attendance

9.1 Principles

Three Bridges Primary School recognises that strong attendance is best achieved through effective, consistent and positive communication with parents and carers. The school is committed to working in partnership with families to ensure that all pupils attend regularly and punctually.

Our approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- Communication will be clear, consistent and accessible to all families
- Communication will be supportive and non-judgemental, recognising that each family's circumstances are different
- Parents and carers are key partners and play a vital role in supporting attendance
- The school will seek to understand barriers to attendance and work collaboratively with families to address them
- Communication will emphasise the importance of attendance for children's learning, wellbeing and sense of belonging

9.2 Key Messages

In all communication with parents and carers, the school will consistently reinforce that:

- Every day in school matters for children's learning and development
- Good attendance supports academic progress, friendships and wellbeing
- Missing school can have a cumulative impact, even when absences appear occasional
- The school is committed to supporting families to ensure pupils attend wherever possible
- Parents and carers should contact the school to discuss any concerns or barriers to attendance at an early stage

9.3 Planned Communication

The school will adopt a proactive approach to communication about attendance, including:

- Start-of-year communication outlining attendance expectations and routines
- Regular reminders through newsletters and other channels reinforcing the importance of attendance
- Seasonal guidance (e.g. on illness, holidays or key attendance periods)

- Whole-school messaging promoting positive attendance (e.g. “every day counts”)

Communication will be delivered through a range of methods, including:

- Letters and emails
- Text messages
- School website and newsletters
- Meetings and workshops
- Face-to-face discussions

9.4 Targeted Communication and Support

The school will use attendance data to identify pupils and groups requiring additional support, and tailor communication accordingly.

This may include:

- Personalised communication for pupils whose attendance is declining
- Early contact with parents where attendance concerns emerge
- Meetings to explore barriers and agree actions
- Ongoing communication to review progress and celebrate improvement

Where attendance concerns become more significant, the school will:

- Work in partnership with families to identify and address underlying causes
- Provide or signpost appropriate support
- Develop individual support or reintegration plans where necessary

9.5 Support First Approach

The school operates a ‘support first’ approach to attendance. This means that:

- Initial communication will focus on understanding and support
- The school will seek to build trust and engagement with families
- Formal challenge and enforcement measures will only be considered where support has not led to improvement or where engagement is limited

Parents and carers will be kept informed throughout any attendance support process.

9.6 Consistency and Staff Expectations

All staff will:

- Communicate in a way that is respectful, clear and supportive
- Avoid language that could be interpreted as blaming or accusatory
- Reinforce consistent attendance messages across the school
- Direct parents to appropriate support where needed

Leaders will ensure that staff are supported and trained to deliver effective attendance communication.

9.7 Monitoring Impact

The school will monitor the effectiveness of its communication approach by:

- Reviewing attendance data and trends
- Monitoring the impact of targeted communications
- Gathering feedback from parents and carers where appropriate
- Adjusting communication strategies to improve impact