Bladon C of E Primary School

Rooted in faith, growing in wisdom, shining in life.

Together, we nurture curiosity, inspire creativity, and embrace the world with confidence, compassion, and hope.

'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.' Matthew 5:16

Our school Values: *Equity, Compassion, Responsibility, Friendship, Resilience, and Respect*

Reviewed: June 2026
Next Review: June 2028

Authorised by:	Approved by:
…….	…….
(Vickie Cook, Headteacher)	(Kelly Blok, Chair of Governors)

Attendance Policy C15

Introduction:

At Bladon CE Primary School, ensuring high attendance and punctuality for all is a priority. We want to make sure that all children receive a full-time education that maximises all learning opportunities. Research both locally and nationally shows a clear link between high attendance and good progress and attainment.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence disrupts teaching routines so it may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, children and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will report to you termly on how your child is performing in school and what their attendance is.

Working Together to Support Attendance

Good attendance is a shared responsibility between the school, parents/carers, pupils and where appropriate, other agencies.

We are committed to building positive relationships with families and recognising that there can be many reasons why a child may struggle to attend school regularly. We encourage parents/carers to contact the school at the earliest opportunity if they have concerns about attendance so that support can be put in place before difficulties become more significant.

Our aim is always to work in partnership with families to identify solutions, remove barriers and ensure that every child can access their education successfully.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. If this occurs, school may require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Late night due to celebration or too tired.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed as they are not exceptional circumstances.
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. Where attendance concerns are linked to emotional wellbeing or mental health, the school will work with families to understand the issues and identify appropriate support.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Providing a healthy breakfast.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly.
- Retaining open & honest communication with us.
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive).
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates.

Understanding barriers to attendance

The school recognises that some pupils face additional barriers to attendance, including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), physical health conditions, mental health needs and family circumstances. Where attendance concerns arise, the school will work in partnership with parents and external agencies where appropriate to identify barriers and provide support.

Attendance Support Pathway
Where attendance concerns are identified, the school will normally follow a graduated approach:

1. **Early identification** of attendance concerns through regular monitoring.
2. **Discussion with parents/carers** to understand any barriers affecting attendance.
3. **Support and intervention**, which may include pastoral support, attendance plans or referrals to appropriate services.
4. **Review and monitoring** to assess progress and adjust support where necessary.
5. **Formal intervention**, including involvement of the Local Authority Attendance Team, where attendance does not improve despite support being offered.

At every stage, the school will seek to work collaboratively with families to secure the best outcomes for children.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A child is considered to be persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level can have a significant impact on a child's educational progress, wellbeing and social development.

90% attendance means that a child is absent from school for the equivalent of half a day each week. Over the course of a school career, this can amount to a substantial loss of learning time.

We monitor attendance carefully and will identify children whose attendance is causing concern or who may be at risk of becoming persistently absent.

Where attendance concerns arise, the school will follow the Attendance Support Pathway outlined above and work with families to identify and address barriers to attendance.

Where attendance does not improve despite support being offered, the school may seek advice from the Local Authority Attendance Team and consider further formal intervention in line with local authority procedures.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent, you must:
● Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
● Or you can call into school and report to the office, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent, we will:
● Telephone or message you via email or Class Dojo on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
● Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher if absences persist.
● Follow the Attendance Support Pathway, if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to always have your current contact numbers. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The County Attendance Team:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at the Local Authority. At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A). Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered child at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.''

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your 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; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8:30a.m. and we expect your child to be in school at that time. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

Registers are marked by 8:50a.m and then they will be closed. 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.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of absence in exceptional circumstances:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take time off in school time to go on holiday.

- It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
- Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications.
- All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- The Head Teacher may meet personally with a family applying for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
- The Headteacher may only authorise leave during term time where exceptional circumstances apply and will consider each request individually.

- Reasons for leave should be logged on the child's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

Penalty notices may be issued by the Local Authority in accordance with current national regulations and local authority procedures. Details of current penalty notice arrangements are available from the Local Authority.

The school aims for all pupils to achieve attendance of 96% or above wherever possible and we will keep you updated about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this, however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire. Through the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and children as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.