

Bilsthorpe Flying High Academy



Attendance Policy

**Updated September 2023
Due for Review September 2024**

Introduction:

This policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole staff and has been drawn up in consultation with staff and governors.

School Aims:

- To provide an environment in which all children feel safe, cared for and supported.
- To encourage independence and confidence to take risks and make their own decisions.
- That every child who walks out of the door at the end of Year 6 will have become the very best that they can be.
- All our aims are encapsulated by our pledges to encourage:
 - **Responsibility**
 - **Perseverance**
 - **Aspiration**
 - **Pride**
 - **Fun**
 - **Confidence**
 - **Creativity**

Vision Statement:

To provide every child in our care with the best quality education possible, in a warm, respectful and caring environment. Our children will be capable of dealing with the priorities of today as well as the unknown priorities of tomorrow. To put our school in the heart of the community and form links with that community which will benefit our children.

As a Thrive School, Bilsthorpe Flying High Academy embeds the Thrive Approach throughout our ethos, policies, and procedures. The Thrive Approach appreciates children's individual needs and understands that children's behaviour is a communication of an unmet need. We therefore approach all aspects of school with a nurturing and holistic vision, building strong relationships and ensuring children's emotional wellbeing is supported. It is essential that children feel safe, special and have their needs met to enable them to access their learning potential and build strong foundations to emotional resilience.

Attendance Policy

We expect all our children to attend school 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. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

At Bilsthorpe Flying High Academy, we aim to work in partnership with parents to ensure that:

- There is a culture of aspiration and relentless striving for excellence where learning is held in high esteem and celebrated.
- Pupils are punctual and prepared for lessons.
- Pupils value their education.
- Few pupils are absent or persistently absent and no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance.
- The attendance of pupils who have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence is showing marked and sustained improvement.

- The attendance of pupils who have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence is rising quickly towards the national average.
- We develop supportive strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and reduce all absences.
- Work in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure good attendance of pupils to give them the best possible education.

Aims

We aim to:

- Take all reasonable steps to maximize attendance rates
- Actively discourage late arrival
- Be consistent in the application of the school's registration and attendance procedures

Legal Framework

It is recognised that parents, schools and Local Education Authorities have statutory responsibilities with regard to school attendance.

Parental Responsibility

- Parents are required to ensure that their children receive efficient, full time education and are therefore primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school as outlined in section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
- Thus, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children:
 - Attend school regularly
 - Arrive at school on time, in uniform and in a condition to learn
 - Are absent only for reasons that can be authorized.
- Parents are required to inform the school of the reason for any absence and the likely return date, as soon as possible.

School Responsibility

- To regularly check and effectively monitor school attendance and to inform parents and Governors of their findings

Registration

The school keeps an attendance register for each class in which pupils are marked present or absent at the beginning of each school session.

- The morning registration period is from 8.50am – 9.05am
- The afternoon registration period is from 1.00pm to 1.15pm.

Attendance is recorded directly onto Scholarpack by the class teacher and a daily absence list is collated by the school office following the procedure for unknown absences. This is shared with appropriate members of staff, including the Safeguarding team.

Lateness

We recognise that persistent lateness is:

- detrimental to the child's education
- administratively disruptive
- a poor preparation for future schooling and adult life.
- All pupils arriving after registration periods have ended have to sign in at the office.
- Pupils arriving within 20 minutes of registration closing will receive a late mark **L** and the minutes late will be recorded on Scholarpack.
- Pupils arriving more than 20 minutes after registration has closed will receive a **U** mark which is an

unauthorised absence and the minutes late will be recorded on Scholarpack.

- If the reason for lateness beyond 9.20am/1.35pm is an exceptional circumstance as agreed by the Headteacher then code 'L' will be used.
- Parents whose children regularly arrive late will receive warning letters from school. If warning letters are ignored and punctuality does not improve, the child's parent will be invited to a meeting with the Head Teacher. Extreme cases may be referred to the Targeted Support Service.

Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures

- It is recognised that children may arrive or depart mid-session for a variety of reasons which may be authorised:
 - illness or accident in school resulting in a child going home
 - medical or dental appointments
 - unavoidable delays or reasons to leave early.
- Pupils present for registration who leave early, or for part of a session, will be noted in the *Pupil Signing In/Out Book* in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. *The register itself is not altered.*
- Pupils not present for registration who return later from an appointment will be noted in the *Pupil Signing In/Out Book* in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. The register is subsequently amended to authorise the absence or record an unauthorised absence.

Reporting Absence

- Parents are asked to make contact as soon as possible on the first day of absence, by telephone call or e-mail - informing the school of the reason for the absence and/or nature of any illness. They are also asked to inform the school if there is a likely return date.
- Absences are noted as either authorised or unauthorised (see authorising absence below)
- If no contact has been made, the first day calling procedures will be followed to establish a reason for absence.

First Day calling procedures

- If the reason for a child's absence is unknown by 9.30am, the school office will call the first contact for the child on Scholarpack, if there is no answer, a text message is also sent to this contact
- If there is no contact following this, further contact numbers will be called
- If the office is still unsuccessful in establishing contact, a second text message will be sent informing the first contact that a safe and well being visit will be commenced if no contact
- If there is still no contact, a safe and well being visit will be carried out by a Senior member of staff/Designated Safeguarding Lead

Authorising Absence

- The law states that only the school can approve absence, not parents. If doubts remain about the explanation offered - or where no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

The following codes are used to denote absence:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

- Absence will be authorised if evidence is provided that:
 - the pupil was absent due to illness
 - the pupil was prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
 - the pupil had leave of absence granted by the Headteacher
 - the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
 - the absence was due to a medical or dental appointment – it is expected that appointments of this nature will only require 1 session of absence.

- In addition, the school will consider authorising absence if evidence is provided for the following cases:
 - family bereavement

- external music examination
 - special tuition/events
 - if the absence meets the 'exceptional circumstances' criteria which is defined as an unexpected or unforeseen circumstance that couldn't have been prepared for.
- The school will not authorise absence in the following cases:
 - shopping during school hours
 - children looking after brothers and sisters
 - children minding the house during school hours
 - children avoiding aspects of the curriculum (games, swimming, visits, etc) whether condoned by parents or not.
 - extended holidays that are linked to religious observance events.
- Parents wishing to request a leave of absence should complete an Application for withdrawal from learning form, explaining the circumstances and providing a minimum of 4 weeks' notice. School will then inform parents/carers as to whether the application has been granted or not and outline potential further action if the absence is taken.
- Regular attendance at school is very important. Registers are monitored very carefully. The Local Authority is authorised to administer fines for the following:
 - a number of unauthorised absences, perhaps within a rolling academic year
 - one-off instances of irregular attendance such as holidays taken during term time
 - where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.
 - Notts Local Authority considers an excess of 6 unauthorised half day absences within any given rolling 6 week period as persistent absence. Notts Local Authority will pursue cases of poor attendance through the courts.

At Bilsthorpe Flying High Academy we recognise that good attendance means...



Issuing Education Attendance Penalty Notices

- In line with Nottinghamshire Local Authority regulations, any unauthorised leave of absence, whether for holidays, (persistent) lateness, or any other form of unauthorised absence, of more than 3 days or 6 half day sessions (over a 6 week rolling period) will be reported to the local authority and could lead to parents/carers being issued with an Education Penalty Notice per child:
 - If paid within 21 days the fine will be £60 per child.
 - If paid after 21 days the fine will be £120 per child.
- All adults responsible for care of the child can be fined
- Payment must be paid direct to the local authority.
- Parents can be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made.
- Where a fine remains unpaid, the matter will be enforced at the Magistrates Court. The maximum fine for this offence is up to £1000 per parent, per child.
- The Local Authority will not issue more than two Education Penalty Notices per calendar year to any person taking more than two periods of unauthorised absence. Where further absences occur or where the Local Authority deems it appropriate, enforcement will be dealt with directly through the Magistrate's Court.

Missing Children in Education

Children are considered missing in Education should they have an unauthorised absence of more than 10 days and any attempts to contact the family have been unsuccessful. School office staff and SLT follow the Missing Children in Education procedures as in line with Nottinghamshire County Council guidelines.

Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

- Attendance will be examined regularly to look for:
 - low attendance
 - persistent absence – lower than 90% attendance
 - punctuality
 - persistent lateness
 - patterns of absence
 - unexplained absences
- Where there are concerns regarding attendance, a letter will be sent in the first instance, offering support from the Family Support Worker and Head Teacher.
- If there is no improvement in the attendance, families will be invited in to meet with the Head Teacher and Family Support Worker to create an Attendance Plan using the ATTEND framework.
- Evidence of illness may be requested to authorise absences where children's attendance is significantly below 90%. Parents will be informed of this action by letter.
- Should there still be no improvement, the Head Teacher will make the decision to make appropriate referrals to targeted services and enforcement with the local authority.

This policy will be reviewed and updated in line with the school Monitoring Cycle.

Complaints:

All complaints will follow the school's complaints policy.

Signed Chair of Governors: Date:

Signed Headteacher:.....