



Bacton
Primary School



Mendlesham
Primary School
LEARNING FOR LIFE

Bacton Primary School and Mendlesham Primary School Attendance Policy

Updated: October 2024

Review due: Feb 2026 or sooner as required

Please read in conjunction with

Oxlip Safeguarding Policy & Local Procedures

Oxlip Supporting Children With Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy

Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy

Behaviour & Anti-bullying Policy

1. Introduction, aims and objectives

1.1 Bacton and Mendlesham Primary Schools are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils / students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and Local Board (LB) – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation and is based on current Government and Local Authority Guidance and Statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

1.4 The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the school encourages and enables good attendance
- How the school monitors and reviews attendance
- How the school monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

1.5 Rationale - Children are entitled to a full time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and we will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. 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.

1.6 There is a relationship between attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress.

1.7 The school is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life.

1.8 The Education Act 1996 states that:

S.576: "Meaning of "parent". In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person— (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or (b) who has care of him."

S.7: "Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable— (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

S.444: "Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Bacton and Mendlesham Primary Schools have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 Attendance Leader – Bacton: Angela Thomas - 01449 781367, Mendlesham: Tessa Sait – 01449 766224

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the LB termly. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately

2.4 Class teachers

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers. It is the practice at school to register all pupils (including those under compulsory school age).

ii) The register will be called promptly between 8.50 am and 8.55 am and at 1.00 pm - 1.05pm (Monday to Friday) by each teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close 15 minutes after they open in both the morning and afternoon session. Any pupils who arrive after the register **closes** will be counted as LATE and will be dealt with under the school's policy.

2.5 The LB and Trust

Termly figures and reports are submitted and discussed by the school's LB and subsequently by the Learning and Performance Committee of the Trust Board. LBs will support actions to ensure that levels of attendance are good with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students at the school.

2.6 Parents and Carers

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and fulltime education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child).

Bacton and Mendlesham Primary Schools, in line with Local Authority protocols, expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- not expect the school to agree automatically to any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school

Parent/carers are also expected to:

- notify school on the first and each subsequent day of absence as early as possible from 7.30am. The number is **Bacton 01449 781367, Mendlesham 01449 766224**
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day
- arrange, wherever possible, dental or medical appointments outside of school hours
- advise the school of any absence for appointments beforehand, for example, providing medical evidence to the Attendance Lead via the school office
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parent/carers' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities
- accept that parent/carers do not have the right to take students out of school for holidays in term time
- complete an exceptional leave of absence form at least 15 school days before the date
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives.

2.7 Pupil Responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or the Attendance Officer.

It is the pupil's responsibility to:

- attend school regularly;
- be punctual to registration and lessons, arriving with correct equipment and ready to learn
- follow school procedures if they arrive late for school (enter the school via the office and provide a reason why they are late)

3. Absences

3.1 As a guide the school is likely to authorise absences in the circumstances below:

- Where the school is satisfied that the pupil is too unwell to attend
- Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours where possible and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send them to school beforehand)
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the families control e.g. extreme weather conditions
- Where the absence occurs on the day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil and parents/carers belong
- Where the pupil lives in catchment but more than three miles from school and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the local authority
- In other exceptional circumstances e.g. the wedding of a close family member or a family bereavement and for a very limited period
- Exceptional circumstances for term time holiday outlined in 5.3

3.2 Absences will be unauthorised when:

- No explanation has been given by the parent / carer
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation of the absence

- The pupil is staying at home to mind the house or care for a relative
- A pupil is absent because of parent / carer work commitments or trips
- The pupil is absent for other reasons e.g. a birthday, concert, festival or show, sporting matches/games, family gathering or celebrations, oversleeping or lateness due to a social event
- The pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission, or where insufficient notice has been given for the absence request to be processed
- The pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent / carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence
- A pupil has been collected (or has asked to be collected) from school without following procedures

3.3 If a student accumulates ten or more sessions of unauthorised absence over an academic year, the Education Attendance Service will be involved and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued

4. Punctuality and Lateness

4.1 Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time and be in the classroom promptly, every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class if they are late. Pupils who arrive late whilst the register is open will be marked as such with the number of minutes late recorded (See paragraph 2.4 iii).

4.2 Persistent lateness is defined as 10 or more late marks recorded in one academic year and will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence, including fixed penalty notices. Where students are developing a pattern of lateness, parents/carers will be contacted by the school with the aim of resolving the matter. If punctuality does not improve, a late mark (code L).

5. Term Time Holidays

5.1 School term dates and holidays are published a year in advance and holiday periods exist at Half Term as well as Christmas, Easter and in the Summer.

5.2 Bacton and Mendlesham School's policy is not to grant a leave of absence for holidays other than in the most exceptional circumstances (5.3). A leave of absence form must be submitted in advance for the intended holiday. Request to the school should be made prior to booking and the school requires 15 working days in order to make a response

Bacton and Mendlesham Primary School will not authorise a holiday:

- during periods of National tests i.e. SATs
- where a student's authorised absence is above 4% for any reason

5.3 Bacton and Mendlesham Primary Schools will only consider authorising holiday leave in the following circumstances:

- For Armed Service Personnel (Army, Navy, RAF) whose specific tour and duties prevent them from taking holidays during term time
- For Emergency Services Personnel (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastguard) who were unable to take leave at any other time due to national event or a period of national significance
- A family need to spend time together during or after a significant period of emotional crisis (which should be supported by at least one external agency)

5.4 All requests of leave of absence for holiday must be submitted using the leave of absence form - available [here](#). In any case, term time leave of more than 10 sessions (5 days) cannot be authorised.

5.5 Approved Educational Activity

Where a pupil is engaged in an off-site approved educational activity, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register

6. Intervention Strategies

We understand that attendance figures will be heavily skewed by even a single absence in the first half term. Therefore, our intervention strategy will not be implemented (i.e. letters being sent) until the second half of the autumn term (after October half term). However, there may be circumstances where this is brought forward or where meetings will be the immediate strategy (i.e. if a letter would not be productive).

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Bacton and Mendlesham Primary Schools recognise that early intervention can help to prevent poor punctuality and attendance. We recognise that a range of pupils may experience difficulties and we will always strive to help and support wherever possible. Our aim is for all students to secure 100% attendance and assistance is available through our Early Help Offer. Examples of the types of bespoke support we may offer are:

- Person-centred planning meetings with the DSL, SENDCo or Attendance Lead to listen to and discuss the specific challenges and needs of the family.
- Establishing a bespoke incentive strategy in school such as the use of reward charts.
- A soft start to the day
- Offering additional sensory or rest breaks during the school day to support with emotional regulation.
- Ensure that a familiar adult is available to welcome the child to school and ensure that their transition into the school day is positive.
- Ensure that the child has plenty of opportunities through the school week to share their gifts and engage with learning that enhances their strengths to build up a positive view of school.
- Work to establish further and enriched positive relationships with adults and their peers in school.
- Work with a child's wider network of friends and family to find solutions.
- Bespoke intervention activities related to the zones of regulation emotional wellbeing approach to help children develop a better understanding of their own feelings and strategies to help them cope with any anxieties that they may be feeling.
- Support with establishing toileting routines that allow children and their families to be independent and have a good night's sleep.
- Support with sourcing appropriate clothing and resources for use in school.
- Home visits to support with transition into school and children at risk of school avoidance.
- Engaging with the School Nursing service to address any issues with a child's physical health.
- Referral for at home support from charities such as Homestart to work together to establish better sleep or morning routines.

- Access to parenting guidance and support through the Mental Health Support service for challenges relating to anxiety, sleep, low mood, eating disorders and other mental health needs.
- Opening a CAF (common assessment framework) to access a family support practitioner.
- Engagement with the alternative tuition service for advice and support for children at risk of non-attendance.
- Work with the child and their family to establish a clearer understanding of the long view for child's future and the importance of education in this. Help the child and family to gain further understanding of the knowledge and skills they will need on the path towards achieving their own hopes and dreams.

6.2 Within the context of support and assistance being provided at an early stage, the school adopts a staged response to student attendance involving the Education Welfare Service:

- **Stage 1: Attendance below 92% is closely monitored**
- **Stage 2: Attendance falling below 90% a first letter is sent home**
- **Stage 3: If attendance does not improve, offers of early help including in school support such as meetings with parents, referral to the school nursing team or other agencies takes place**
- **Stage 4: If attendance continues to fall and parents/carers have not engaged with support at stage 3, a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will be made**
- **Stage 5: If attendance continues to fall parents/carers will be invited into school for a review meeting and to agree a plan for improvement**
- **Stage 6: If attendance continues to fall and/or parents/carers do not engage with EWO/meetings with attendance lead at school, a fixed penalty notice is likely to be issued**

(Where parents/carers do not attend the meeting with the Education Welfare Service, a further letter is sent requesting contact within 3 days. Where this is not forthcoming, the school will move automatically to Stage 6).

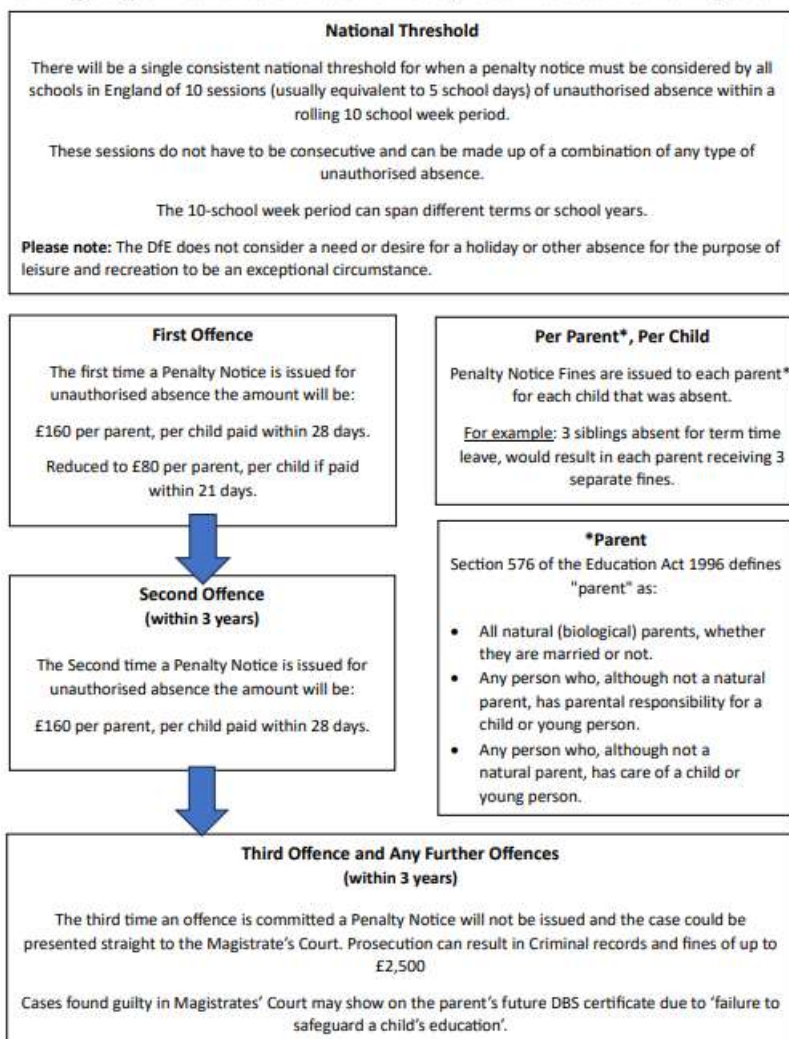
7. Penalty Notices for Absences

7.1 We have a duty of care shared with the Local Authority to challenge poor attendance. From 1st September 2014 Suffolk's Education Attendance Service began issuing Penalty Notices. Penalty Notices will be issued for Bacton and Mendlesham Primary Schools in the following situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- A pupil has been identified for the first time as having ten sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence in the current academic year; this includes being persistently late
- Where a child takes a holiday during term-time which is not authorised by the school

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are changing from 19th August 2024

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by DfE, the following changes will come into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.



8. Systems and (Strategies) for Managing and Improving Attendance

8.1 Attendance has a very high profile at school and is regularly promoted during assemblies and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and at school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment. Weekly attendance figures are displayed within the weekly school newsletter. Bacton and Mendlesham Primary Schools have procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week.

8.2 Response to Absence (attendance officers – Donna Simonds, Rebecca Riches, Dawn Ferguson)

- First day - If a student is absent without explanation (i.e. the parents/carers have not reported an absence by 9.00am) then parents/carers will be telephoned to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify any students who may be absent without their parent/carer's knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parent/carers on the first day of absence, the school will send an email/text reminding parents/carers of the importance of attending school and requesting a response.
- We will call all known contacts recorded for the pupil to establish their where about for safeguarding reasons. We may also contact sibling educational establishments for the same purpose. The Attendance Lead will be informed.

If we have reason for concern for a child's safety, we will contact MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub) for advice.

- Second day - If the student's absence remains unreported and no response has been received to the day one email, then contact by phone will be pursued over the course of the day. If we remain concerned about your child's well-being/safety, we may ask police or a social care contact to make a home visit/welfare check.

8.3 Where absence is linked to illness, medical evidence may be required

8.4 The school's Attendance Officer and the Attendance Lead with responsibility for attendance will meet regularly to identify students with attendance which is falling below 92%.

8.5 Concerns relating to attendance will be communicated via a staged response (see section 6.2). Letters will vary according to the severity of the pupil's absence at the time. The intention of the letters is to maintain effective channels of communication and to work together to resolve the issues at hand.

8.6 We would ask all parents/carers to respond and engage with the school regarding attendance concerns. Should there be a concern that communication may be breaking down, or that strategies are not being followed, a senior member of staff may contact parents/carers and invite them to a meeting. The meeting may also be attended by a member of the Local Board.

8.7 The school's Attendance Officer and the Attendance Lead with responsibility for attendance will always try and work supportively with pupils and their families. Strategies may include time limited, part-time timetables or alternative provision.

8.8 Celebrating good attendance. Bacton and Mendlesham Primary Schools value good attendance (95%+). We further encourage children by;

- Class attendance celebrated in newsletters
- Best class special privileges
- Improved attendance letters

9. Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across a year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to the child's education and the school needs the parent's/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absences and the reasons given for it thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached Persistent Absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will take immediate action by contacting the parent/carer and putting our concerns in writing. The EWO will also be contacted for advice. See intervention strategies section 6.

10. Collection and Analysis of Data

The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the LB. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection. Attendance data will be submitted to the LB at least termly.

Attendance is monitored on an individual basis. It is also monitored by gender, ethnicity, pupils with SEND and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

Accurate attendance returns will be made and returned to the DfE and the Local Authority as required.

Conclusion:

It is the responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure that children attend school regularly. It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can therefore only do this if children attend regularly. There is a direct and proven correlation between poor attendance and children's attainment which impacts negatively upon their future life chances.

It is the school's legal responsibility to safeguard the children in its care and report any child who is or is in danger or missing education ([CME](#))

Appendix 1 – Registration codes

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
K	Education provision provided by LA	Education provision arranged by a local authority, rather than the school
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Other Authorised Absence	Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Other Authorised Absence	Pupils on part-time timetables
J1	Interview	Leave of absence to attend an interview for employment or admission into another educational institution
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.

S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
I01	Illness	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a pupil referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the pupil is scheduled to attend at their school.

X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y1	Unable to attend	Absence due to transport normally provided not being available.
Y2	Unable to attend	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend	Part of school closed.
Y4	Unable to attend	Unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).
Y5	Unable to attend	Pupils in the criminal justice system.
Y6	Unable to attend	Absence due to public health guidance or law.
Y7	Unable to attend	Any other unavoidable cause.
Z	Pupil Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining. Schools must take attendance for pupils from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Pupils	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.