



## BRIDGE JUNIOR SCHOOL

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Person responsible for policy: **Senior Attendance Champion**, Deputy Head – Mina Vig.

For day-to-day messages about attendance, please contact our school office by ringing 0116 2536092, or send us a message via email or Weduc each day.

Members of the School's Senior Leadership Team will be on gate duty every day. Parents can discuss concerns with them as necessary.

#### **1. SCHOOL TARGETS FOR ATTENDANCE**

Bridge Junior School sets a whole school target every year for attendance. Attendance information is shared with parents on Weduc and via our website.

In order to achieve the best possible attendance for our school, we need the best possible attendance from our pupils. This means that we will listen, empathise and support families when children have absences, but we cannot tolerate absence that is concerning. We will consider information from parents about the reason for a child being absent, but will not automatically authorise all absences. This policy sets out the school's response to attendance and absences.

#### **2. EXPECTATIONS AND DAILY ROUTINES**

We expect all children registered at Bridge Junior School to attend every day when school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We do all we can to encourage all children to attend, and we put in place appropriate support for families when needed. 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 also make the best provision we can for children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2023, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Our gates at 8:25am in the morning and children are expected to be in class for the **morning register, which closes at 8:45am**. We expect children to be on time for morning registration. Children who arrive between **8:45- 9:15am** they will be marked at **late arrivals**.

The law makes clear that children who arrive in school 30 minutes after the register is taken i.e. after 9:15am are absent when the register is taken and will be marked as absent for the whole morning session.

Our afternoon registration time is 1:00pm for our pm session.

We open the gates for home time at 3:00pm each day. Children leave school at 3:05pm

Children who are late, miss out on the important initial learning activities of the day. Children who are regularly late fall behind in their learning. Their day is disrupted, as is the learning of the rest of the class, whose attention is disrupted by the arrival of latecomers.

**If you are 10 minutes late every day, your child will lose almost 7 days of learning a year!**

Regular attendance at school promotes well-being. It gives children the best chance of learning and reaching their potential. Pupils should attend school every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Good attendance and punctuality are important because children:

- Get on better with learning and other children.
- Cope better with school routines, work and friendships.
- Find learning easier because they do not miss out.
- Are more successful moving between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.
- Are known to be safe and well.

Research shows a direct link between high attendance and doing well at school.

All children have a right to an education. Missing school or being frequently late for school means children miss out on vital lessons and learning time.

The table below shows how having days off impacts on attendance:

Attendance (%)	Days missed	Weeks missed	Lessons missed
100%	0	0	0
95%	9 ½	2 (approx.)	40
90%	19	4 (approx.)	80
85%	28 ½	6 (approx.)	120
80%	38	8 (approx.)	160
75%	47 ½	9 ½ (approx.)	200
70%	57	11 ½ (approx.)	230

If children have 80% attendance for 5 years, that is the equivalent to missing a whole year of school.

### **3. BEFORE SCHOOL CARE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

This year we are aiming to set up a Before School Care, Breakfast Club. Children get a healthy breakfast which ensures they are ready for the school day.

After School Clubs are available from 3.05 pm until 4.15 pm. These clubs are changed and rotated each half term.

Most of our clubs are free to attend. If a club has a charge, this is indicated in the letter to parents before signing up.

### **4. SHARING ATTENDANCE INFORMATION WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

We celebrate attendance in awards assemblies, certificates are awarded to classes with the highest attendance or class with the most improved attendance each week.

Termly letters are sent to parents where attendance is or has started to be a concern.

We will send out regular updates on the school's current overall attendance and class attendance on WEDUC.

Where a child's attendance is below 95%, parents will be informed that it is being closely monitored.

Where a child's attendance is below 90%, parents will be informed and notified that further absences will not be automatically authorised. The school's Senior Attendance Champion will consider each absence carefully.

Where attendance is an on-going concern, our Senior Attendance Champion will consider if an Attendance Support Plan is needed and will discuss this with parents.

We will meet with families where there are concerns, we will listen, review and work with families to ensure that the support we offer is effective.

Where a child's attendance is monitored on an Attendance Support Plan we will share any improvements in attendance with the pupil and parents. This might be in a review of the plan, a face to face meeting or a letter.

### **5. ABSENCES**

Any time a child is not in school, or on an activity organised by school is classed as an absence from school. Absences can be recorded as either an authorised absence or an unauthorised absence.

### Authorised absences:

- We classify an absence as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received information about the absence from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, you the parent write a note, email the school office, send a WEDUC message or telephone the school office to explain the absence.
- Where a family takes a day for religious observance, we can only authorise 1 day for each religious festival.
- Medical appointments should be reported to the school office and letters or appointment evidence should be shared with us.
- Explaining an absence or ringing the school does not automatically mean the absence is authorised. Repeated odd days off for illness are monitored by the Senior Attendance Champion (Ms Vig) who may ask for proof of illness before an absence is authorised.
- Only the school can decide if an absence will be authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences reported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. Parents of children who have low attendance will be asked to meet with Ms Vig and possibly be asked to provide proof of illness (this could be an appointment card or text, an appointment letter, sight of a prescription or medication. We do not expect parents to pay for any evidence,) to the school to have an absence authorised.

### Unauthorised absences:

We classify an absence as unauthorised when:

- a child is away from school without the permission of the school or a parent.
- a child is away from school and no reason is given to the school.
- a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If a child's attendance falls below the persistent absence level, <90% then we will record all further absences as unauthorised unless we have clear evidence to support an absence.

## **6. IF A CHILD IS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL**

- If a child is ill or going to be away from school, parents should contact the school office (letter / email / WEDUC/ telephone / visiting the school office in person).
- If no information is received, then we will send a WEDUC message or we will make a phone call to confirm the reason for an absence. If no reply is received and no reason given for the absence, then the absence may be unauthorised. We will continue to attempt to contact families where we are not given information about an absence.
- It is essential that school knows why children are absent for safeguarding of all children.
- Parents must keep informing the school if their child continues to be ill.
- A message may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the office staff will attempt to contact parents / carers as above.
- Schools have to give Local Authorities the name and address of sick pupils who they believe will miss 15 consecutive or cumulative days.
- If other services such as Early Help or Social Services are working with a family. Any absences will be shared with them.

Registers are monitored daily to identify pupils who are absent. If appropriate, a home visit will be made by members of school staff. If there are serious concerns about the safety of a child, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and/or the police will be called to conduct a home visit.

## **7. REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Leaves of absence have a big impact on individual children's education and also have a big impact on the school's overall attendance. All requests for leave of absence need to be made to the school **BEFORE** you book any tickets. Please contact the school office and request a meeting with the **Senior Attendance Champion**, Ms Vig. An appointment will be made where an application form will be completed. We will then confirm the outcome of the application in writing.

Government legislation means that:

- Schools are not allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school during term time for a holiday.
- Requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances and holidays are not considered exceptional.
- Evidence will be required to support requests for leave.

- Penalty Notice fines will be issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days and may be issued for fewer days where this has happened before.
- If an absence is taken without authorisation, the following will apply:
  - For a first unauthorised absence in a 3 year period, a penalty notice of £160 per child, per parent (discounted to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days) will be issued.
  - For a second absence within a 3 year period, the fine will be £180 per child, per parent.
  - For repeated absences, your case may be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates Court.
  - If there are 20 or more days of absence, your child may be removed from the school roll resulting in you having to reapply for a school place.
  - If there are 20 or more school days of absence due to holidays or trips away, this may result in cases proceeding straight to the Magistrates` Court.
  - If your child has other unauthorised absences, of 10 or more half days in a period of 10 weeks, then you can also be fined as above. This includes absences where you have not informed the school why your child is away.
- Reminders of absence procedures and extended absence procedures will be sent to parents /carers on admission to school and at least annually. See appendix for examples of leaflets sent to parents / carers.

## **8. REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES AND SUPPORT TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE**

We will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences:

- The parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the situation with the **Senior Attendance Champion**, Ms Vig.
- If appropriate, we can refer you to other local agencies such as Early Help or the School Nurse service to support your family to improve your child's attendance.
- Your child's attendance will then be monitored and if there is no improvement an attendance plan will be agreed with you. This will be monitored. Targets for attendance will be set for a 3-6 week period initially.
- If your child's attendance does still not improve, then we will refer your case to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service (EWO) for further support.
- If there is still no improvement, the EWO can progress the case to a Penalty Notice or Court Action.
- If there is improvement in attendance this will be celebrated with pupil and parents. Rewards identified in the School's behaviour policy will be awarded to children with improving attendance.

## **9. PERSISTENT ABSENTEES**

These are children whose attendance is below 90%. All children with attendance below 90% are monitored closely. If attendance does not improve, parents will be invited to a meeting with the **Senior Attendance Champion**, Ms Vig. All absences after this meeting will be monitored and we will only authorise future absences if we are certain the absence is for a genuine reason. Referral to the School Nurse service may be sought for a child with ongoing health issues.

Support plans may be agreed with parents for any children who have attendance below 90%

Children with attendance below 90% will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer on a regular basis.

If a child's attendance falls below 50% we will work closely with families and the Education Welfare Officer to ensure that the appropriate support is put in place.

## **10. PUNCTUALITY**

Children who arrive in school after the registers close at 8.45 am, are recorded as late. Any children who arrive after 9.15 am are U coded which means they are marked with an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session. As part of the normal monitoring of attendance, we contact parents where children are often late. We work together with parents to improve the situation.

## **11. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will receive a termly report from the head teacher via the Headteacher Report. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it

is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Schools now have to share schools' attendance data with the department of Education on a daily basis. This is done electronically via the WONDE system.

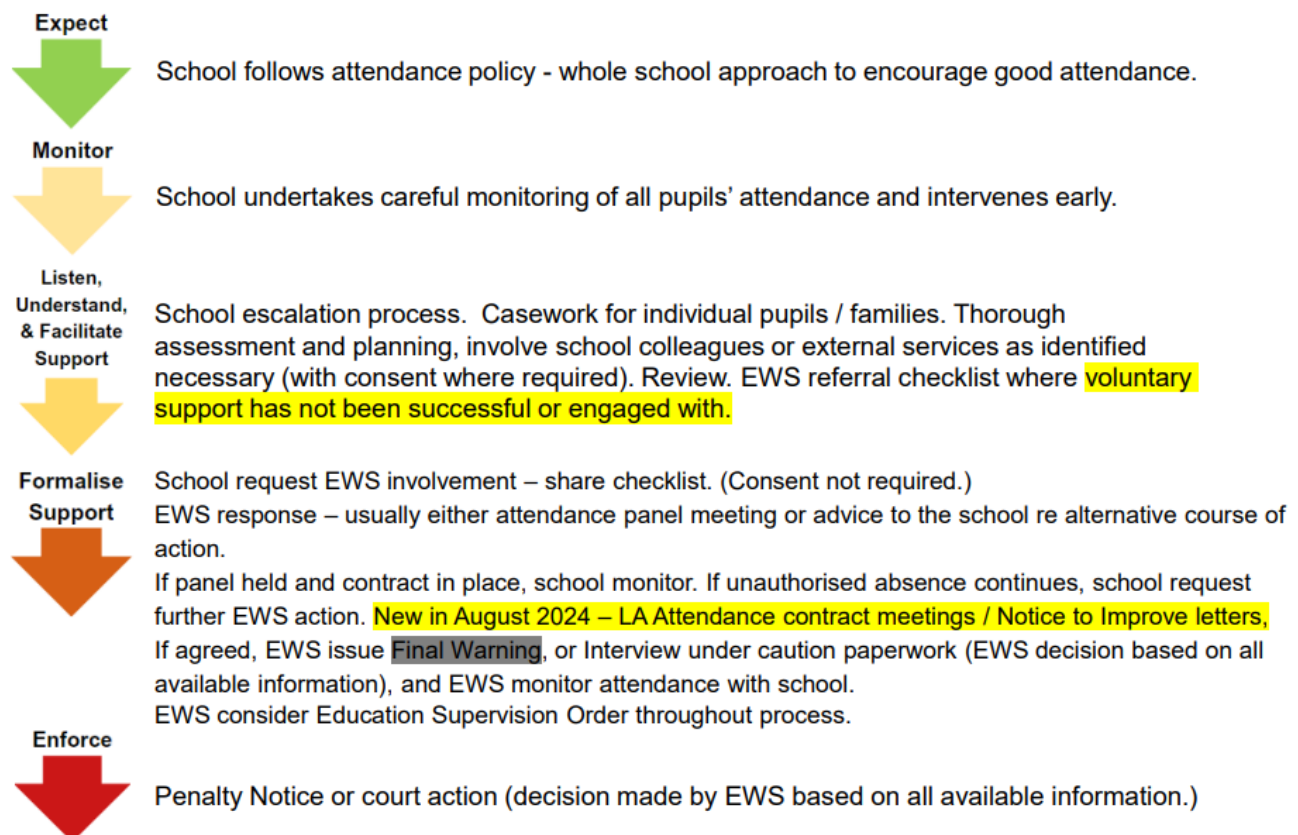
We monitor attendance on an individual pupil level and a school level to identify when issues arise. Where there are concerns, action is taken as outlined in this policy to improve attendance.

Class teachers, office staff together with the Senior Attendance Champion, will be responsible for monitoring attendance in each class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there are concerns about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be monitored by the Senior Attendance Champion, who will arrange contact with the parents or carers.

This policy is a working document and will be reviewed at least annually.

## Appendix 1

# Attendance – graduated response



## Penalty Notice Fines for School Absence are changing



With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice fines issued for unauthorised absence that occurs after 19 August 2024.

### Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave will result in **each** parent receiving 3 **separate** fines.

### 5 Consecutive Days of Term Time Leave

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days, and for fewer days where this has happened before.

### 10 Sessions of Unauthorised Absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of **absence in a 10-week period**.

### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child when paid within 28 days.

(No option to pay at £80 level)

### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The case will proceed to the Magistrates' court. Magistrate's fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child.

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate and may impact on job applications and travel abroad.

**Court prosecutions:** Penalty Notices will not automatically be issued. Parents are advised that where the LA considers that a Penalty Notice is not appropriate due to the level of concern about a child's absence, prosecution action may be taken.

By law, all Penalty Notice payments go to the local authority and not to schools.

