

Bishop Henderson Primary School

With Courage, we flourish. With Compassion, we care. With Creativity, we learn



Attendance Matters

Every pupil at Bishop Henderson Primary School matters.

The most important factor contributing to your child's success at school is to have at least 96% attendance.

The link between attendance and attainment is firmly established.

Those pupils who attend more regularly achieve higher standards and are more likely to be ready for the next part of their educational journey.



Why is 96% attendance important?

'Sarah' has 90% attendance... Sarah thinks this is good. Her parents/carers also think it is good. **Are they right?**

What does 90% attendance mean?

90% attendance = 1/2 day missed every week!

- 1 school year at 90% attendance = 4 whole weeks of lessons missed!
- 90% attendance over 7 years of primary school = 2/3 of a school year missed!

If your child is absent, although the absence may have been authorised by the school, it will still cause a decrease in attendance, as they are not physically present in school.

What impact might this have on later life.....?

- There is a direct relationship between absence in school and pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6).
- There is also a proven direct relationship between absence in school and the qualifications that a student achieves, which will impact future employment.

What can I do to improve my child's attendance?

Ensure that your child is up sufficiently early in the morning to get to school without being late. Bishop Henderson Primary School expects all pupils to be on site by 8.30 am each day. Help your child organise themselves the night before by ensuring that their school bag is packed and ready to go. Ensure that your child is well rested by getting them to bed at an appropriate time.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. It is essential that parents maximise the educational opportunities available to their children and provide the best possible start in life. Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced new powers for designated Local Education Officers, Head teachers (and other members of the Senior Leadership Team, authorised by them) and the police to issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school.

If a pupil has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any 10-week period (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence), or a student persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration, their parents or carers may receive a Penalty Notice fine of £160 per parent per child. If payment is made within 21 days, in some cases, the penalty may be reduced to £80. Failure to pay the fine may result in prosecution and can incur an additional fine of up to £2500 or up to 3 months imprisonment.

Medical & Dental Appointments

Medical and dental appointments rarely last more than 1 hour, but many parents allow their child to be absent from school for the whole session or day.

This is unacceptable. Parents are advised to make medical and dental appointments, where possible, outside of the academic day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend the school for part of the day. The loss of a single day will reduce your child's attendance in any single week by 20%

Illness

This is a sensitive area. Bishop Henderson Primary School does have the right to challenge parents as to whether their child is genuinely ill. **It is the school which authorises absence for illness, not the parent or carer.** Pupils are sometimes absent due to minor illnesses, such as headaches or minor colds, which should not be a reason for absence from school; consequently, it is sometimes necessary to ask for evidence of ill health—such as a copy of your child's prescription or a medical appointment confirmation — if a pupil incurs five or more days of absence due to illness. **A parent whose child is genuinely ill should not be concerned, as their child will have taken medical advice, and this medical advice can be presented to the school. If your child is feeling 'under the weather' but not sick enough to attend the doctor, they should be encouraged to attend school.** Attendance for part of the day is far better than no attendance at all. Naturally, pupils who are genuinely ill will be sent home, following consultation with you.

Planned Leave of Absence

Term-time leave requests will be reviewed and approved only in the case of exceptional circumstances at the Headteacher's discretion; all other absences will be unauthorised. Should parents choose to take their children on holiday when it has not been authorised by the school, a penalty notice will be raised on the 10th session of absence. A school day is made up of two sessions, morning and afternoon, therefore ten sessions is a full five days.

Examples of exceptional circumstances:

- Parent in the armed forces or medical profession.
- Death of a close family member.
- Terminal illness of a family member.
- Wedding of an immediate family member.

Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, absence will only be granted at the Headteacher's discretion and if there are not already concerns surrounding that student's attendance. Penalty notices will be raised with Somerset County Council following ten consecutive unauthorised sessions of absence or a total of ten sessions of unauthorised absence within a continuous 10-week period.

Termly Attendance Letters

Parents will be sent an Attendance Letter at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. This will detail your child's attendance to date and give details of which of the bands (shown below) they fall into. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of your child's attendance, please make an appointment with the class teacher or Mr Lane.

Attendance Banding Indicator

Descriptor	Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Lost Hours of Learning
Excellent	100% - 99%	0 - 2	0 - 10
Good	98% - 98%	4 - 8	19 - 48
Requires Improvement	95% - 91%	9 - 17	58 - 86
Persistent Absence	90% - 86%	19 - 27	95 - 133
Critical	85% - 80%	29 - 38	143 - 190

Attendance Strategy

96 – 100% Attendance

Congratulations your child's attendance is excellent!

91 – 96% Attendance

Your child's attendance is slipping and is now below the national average. Your child may have been ill or taken time off due to a sporting event or family holiday. This is not without cost to their education. They must try to catch up on the work they have missed and work hard to improve their attendance over the coming weeks. You can help improve their attendance by making sure that all appointments are out of school hours. The school may write raising concerns about the attendance percentage or request further evidence to support reasons for absence to ensure any absence is coded correctly.

86-90% Attendance

Your child's attendance has fallen significantly below the national average for pupils in primary schools in England.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. As a school, it is our duty to challenge pupil absence.

The school will again write to parents raising concerns surrounding attendance and informing parents that, when certain thresholds are met, a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be required.

Where Attendance Does Not Improve

If there is no improvement, the school will begin to prepare a referral for Education Welfare involvement, this can lead to fines, prosecution, community hours, court orders etc. If a referral is made, you will be either be issued with a Warning Penalty Notice, which requires the pupil to be in school for 15 consecutive days, or a referral for case work will be requested, which will lead to parents being invited into the School for a Parenting Contract meeting with the Attendance Lead and/or Headteacher.