

# **BOURTON MEADOW EDUCATION TRUST (BMET)**



## **ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY**

**(Including Policy for Family Holidays during  
Term Time)**

**Date: August 2018**

**Review: August 2021**

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## 1. Introduction

BMET and Bourton Meadow Academy, George Grenville Academy, Lace Hill Academy, Lumbertubs Primary School and Spring Lane Primary School seek to ensure that all their pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The academies will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the relevant academy community feels wanted and secure.

All academy staff will work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend the relevant academy regularly and on time.

The academies have established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives the academies has established effective and efficient systems of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## 2. Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

## 3. Expectations

**We expect that all pupils will:**

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

**We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they contact the school **daily** of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.

**What you can expect from the Academies:**

- To make attendance and punctuality procedures, a priority for all those associated with the academies including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To develop an understanding for parents and pupils that high rates of attendance lead to sustained and therefore successful learning.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To discourage holiday absence by making parents clear that holiday absence in term time is unauthorised.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.

- To implement a system of rewards to promote high levels of attendance for each child e.g. 100% attendance certificates.
- To promote effective partnerships with the Children’s Services Welfare Department of the LAs who work with the academies.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning return to school following significant periods of absence.
- To inform parents of attendance rates in annual reports to parents.
- To clarify the times for the beginning of each session, academies term dates and training days.
- To clarify the procedure for parents with regards to lateness or absence.
- To ensure clearly defined late registration procedures for parents and pupils.
- To respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
- To review attendance regularly.
- To highlight the importance of attendance for children through:
  - PSHE lessons
  - Assemblies
  - and for parents:
    - in Parents’ meetings (including pre-academy meetings)
- To report to Directors termly:
  - Attendance Rate %
  - Authorised Absence rate %
  - Unauthorised Absence rate %
- To promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents

#### 4. Examples of authorised & unauthorised absences

<p><b>Authorised absences:</b>          *genuine illness of the pupil;          *hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the pupil;          * major religious observances          *visits to prospective new schools          *external exams or educational assessments.          * exclusion</p>	<p><b>Unauthorised absences:</b>          *family holiday          *shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;          *a birthday treat;          *oversleeping due to a late night;          *looking after other children / other family member;          *appointments for other family members.</p>
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## 5. Holiday in Term-Time

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he/ she is a registered pupil. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the Local Authority prosecuting the parents. **If found guilty of the offence, each parent could be fined up to £2500, and/or sentenced to three months imprisonment. The parent may alternatively be subject to a fixed penalty fine of £60 per child per parent.**

Absence during term time as a result of term time holidays, interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in academy. We actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term time and will only authorise absence for such holidays in exceptional circumstances.

Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect term time leave to be granted and all leave is granted at the discretion of the Headteacher. Leave for the purpose of a family holiday will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**. If leave is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded in the academy attendance register as unauthorised absence, which is as truancy, and the matter may be referred to the academy's education welfare officer.

The Headteacher reserves the right to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances, which *might* include the following:

- A parent or grandparent is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday;
- There has recently been a death or other significant trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation;
- The holiday is a unique one-off never to be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.

As a rule, the financial factor when a parent claims that they are unable to afford a holiday during academy holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time, should not constitute an exceptional circumstance. It is acknowledged that individual head teachers may have their own views and perspectives on this, and may choose to respond according to these views and perspectives.

Similarly, the nature of the proposed holiday should not be taken as exceptional circumstances, although again, it is acknowledged that individual head teachers may have their own view and perspectives on this and may choose to respond in the light of those.

We will not grant leave if:

- A child's attendance record over the previous 20 week period is less than 95% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness;

- The period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to or coincides with tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the academy calendar.

## How do I apply for 'Exceptional circumstances' absence?

'Exceptional circumstances', means that the parent must make out the case as to why their child should be treated differently to the norm.

The circumstances of each case should be taken in to account. In any case, if a parent is planning holiday absence for a child, a letter to the Headteacher requesting a holiday absence must be completed **prior to** the absence taking place.

The parent must make the case for the period of absence (e.g. Booking holidays because it is cheaper in term time is not an acceptable reason for holiday absence.)

**In an exceptional case, where the Headteacher has agreed holiday absence, this will be authorised. Unauthorised absences will be recorded where this has not been the case. There is no appeal process but parents can choose to follow BMET's complaints policy.**

## 6. Special Occasions

Only exceptional occasions warrant authorised absence e.g. attending the wedding of a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or shopping trip would not. The birth of another baby within the family can be seen as a special occasion, though each case must be considered individually.

## 7. Lateness

The code for lateness will be entered when a child has arrived in school after registration is closed 10 minutes after opening. A child arriving after this time will be coded as "Late after registration closed" - this is counted as an "Unauthorised Absence".

## 8. Medical appointments

A child who is out of school for medical/dental appointments will be marked as having an authorised absence. Permission must be sought beforehand.

Review Date: 2021

Trust Director signature  
Date:

Name