

Attendance Newsletter

Autumn
Term 2023



Welcome back to a new academic year at Bilton School! Last year saw one of the best years for attendance rewards yet! We gave out a huge amount of HAPS, mountains of chocolates, footballs, headphones, speakers, 80 pain au chocolate from the canteen and 100s of pounds in gift vouchers! We were especially proud to issue rewards to two students with 100% attendance for the second year in a row! We are planning something even bigger for this year, with rewards for good attendance and the most improvement. As always, please remember the Attendance Team are here to work with families and offer help and support if needed to help your child attend school.

Please take a moment to remind yourself of the key attendance information below:

If a student must be absent:

You can now use the Class Charts app or website to report a child absent. This will enable you to report your child's absence, future appointments, upload medical documentation and receive an acknowledgement from school. Please see the attached PDF for information on how to do this.

We would prefer notification via Class Charts but if this is not possible, please call 01788 840600 and press 1 to speak to the attendance team or to leave a message. Alternatively, email the attendance team on bilabsence@stowevalley.com.

Please give us more detail than 'poorly' or 'unwell'. All information is handled confidentially, and this allows us to keep accurate records as well as ensure that we can offer the best support for your child on their return. Where possible, please provide medical evidence such as pictures of medication or appointment letters.

Let us know before 8.30am if your child is going to be absent from school. You must do this every day that your child is absent.

If your child is absent for 3 days and we do not hear from a parent or carer, we will conduct a welfare check. This is to ensure the correct support is in place for the student. After 5 days of absence with a reason we will request medical evidence be provided.

If a student feels unwell during the school day:

Your child must be seen by a member of the First Aid team who can assess them and make sure that they are offered appropriate medical attention. If necessary, the First Aid team will phone parents or carers to request that their child is collected from school. Students should not phone home directly.

Medical appointments

All medical appointments should be made outside of school times where possible. If your child needs to miss school to attend an appointment, please ensure that copies of letters or treatment are sent to the attendance team.

If your child is leaving during the school day, they must sign out at the attendance office first.

Lateness

Students are marked late if they do not arrive to their form room by 8.50am. All late marks will affect your child's attendance figures. We expect all students to arrive at school on time every day, ideally by 8.40am to be ready for form time.

Leave of Absence Requests

The Headteacher can only authorise absences in exceptional circumstances. Leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents whose children have unauthorised absence are likely to be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution. Please see the attached additional information regarding term time absences.

Thank you for your continued support in helping your child to be the best they can be at Bilton School.

Kind Regards,

Elizabeth Keell – Associate Assistant Head Teacher

Cathy Dillon – Attendance Team Leader

Lisa Mushing-Rimmer – Attendance Administrator

Alicia O'Toole – Attendance Administrator

LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME UPDATED INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The Supreme Court has clarified the law on unauthorised leave, including holidays, during term time (Platt v Isle of Wright 2017). The Supreme Court has made clear that attending school 'regularly' means that the children must attend school on every day that they are required to do so. As such, the parents of any child who is absent from school without authorisation for any length of time are likely to be considered as committing an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996.

The regulations regarding Leave of Absence (The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.) advise:

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

If the leave is granted, Head teachers are able to determine the number of school days a child can be absent for.

It is for the Head teacher to decide what is 'exceptional' and it is at their discretion if the circumstances warrant the leave to be granted. When making an application for Leave of Absence in advance parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify parents of their decision. It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent ie the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may result in legal action being taken against the parent(s), by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s). *Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits*

Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice. All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service, part of Warwickshire County Council.

It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 per child if paid within 21 days).

Where a Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within the required timeframe as set out on the notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal proceedings under S444 Education Act 1996.

Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices.

Your child's progress academically as well as socially is our shared priority.

Warwickshire School pupils recorded 96,366 half day sessions of absence due to holiday in the Academic year 2021/22.