



12th September 2023

Dear Parents,

At the start of the new academic year, I wanted to write to you to share the measures we will be putting in place to encourage your child to maintain excellent attendance at school. Pupil attendance is a key priority at Bowes and this year we will be closely monitoring pupil absence.

Term Time Absence and Holiday Requests

This year again, **we will not be authorising any holidays**. We have 13 weeks holiday each year and therefore ask you to take your holidays during those weeks. Please [click here](#) to view the term dates for this year. If there are exceptional circumstances, please put your request in writing to the school, outlining those circumstances, before any tickets are booked. **Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued following periods of unauthorised absence.**

Bowes Absence Procedure

If your child is too unwell to attend school then please notify us by **8.30am**, either by leaving a message on the school absence line (020 8368 2552 option 1), or by emailing office@bowesprimary.org with your child's full name, class and reason for absence.

Is my child too ill for school?

It can be a tricky decision deciding whether or not to send your child into school if they are unwell. The NHS has released [guidance for parents](#), so that an informed decision can be made about whether your child is 'too ill for school'. I would highly recommend you read this information, as it is a helpful guide on the different types of common childhood illnesses, and what to look out for. We always encourage children to attend school, regardless of minor illness, and we will send a child home who is not well enough to be in. It is often the case that once a child has got in and settled in lessons, they are able to learn well and make it through the school day.

The staff at Bowes acknowledge that there is an increase in symptoms of anxiety in some children since the pandemic. Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it. The DfE has published useful [guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance](#) and those who are experiencing persistent symptoms will be encouraged to access additional support.

Medical Appointments

Where possible, please make medical / dental appointments outside of school time and during holidays. We do understand that these appointments can be hard to come by and sometimes it is unavoidable that they are scheduled during school time, particularly in the case of hospital appointments. In these instances, children should, wherever possible, come into school before and/or after their appointment in order to maximise their learning time in school. **Please email office@bowesprimary.org with a record of the appointment (letter, screenshot of text appointment etc) to record against the absence.**

Persistent Absence

An attendance figure of 90% is considered as '**persistent absence**' by the Department for Education, and although this figure may seem high, it represents **19 days** of school missed in one academic year and can have a profound impact on learning.

What will the school do to support my child's school attendance?

To support your child's attendance, we will:

- Ensure all staff rigorously monitor attendance each week;
- Recognise pupils who consistently maintain excellent attendance or make improvements;
- Work with families and put positive support plans in place for children who are missing school;
- Make contact with parents if their child's attendance becomes a concern;
- **Refer children to the Educational Welfare Officer so they can receive specialist attendance support and advice responding to illness.**

Finally, if you have any questions regarding the information in this letter, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school.

Yours sincerely,

Effie Demetriou
Headteacher

