

September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

We hope that your child has settled well into this new academic school year. Having been back at school for a few weeks, we would like to remind you of our attendance policy and how important it is that children attend school.

We recognise that we have been through a few years of disruption with COVID and scarlet fever which have led to periods of absence. We all need to work together to ensure we have a more consistent year of attendance for all our children this year. There are occasions when it is appropriate for children to miss a school session, such as when a child is genuinely too ill to attend school, but these should be infrequent. If your child has a medical appointment that cannot be taken outside of school hours or a request that has been agreed in exceptional circumstances, please consider missing as short a period as possible. It should be possible to start the half day, leave for the appointment and return to complete the session. During the last two years, we have noticed that anxiety is one of the reasons behind increased absence rates for some children. We agree with the words of Sir Chris Whitty below:

“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.”

Sir Chris Whitty (Chief Medical Officer for England)

We have well-trained staff in school and links with local organisations to support children and families if such situations arise. Please explain the reason for absence to staff and we will work together to support you and your child in minimising the impact of this.

The attendance policy outlines the expectations of your child’s school and is used across our Trust. It can be found on your child’s school website at www.***primary.co.uk (ie www.blislandprimary.co.uk) or you can request a paper copy should you not have access to the internet. Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend regularly and on time. It is a parent’s /carer’s responsibility in law to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend the registered school.

We have high expectations of our children and families and need a high rate of attendance for children to flourish. Our school regularly monitors children’s attendance in accordance with our attendance policy. We expect children to achieve no less than 96% attendance (in line with national attendance data). Children with 100% attendance are 1.6 times more likely to achieve national expectations at the end of Year 6 and 4.7 times more likely to achieve Greater Depth, than children that missed 15-20% of all sessions. Of children who miss school, only 35% manage to achieve five top graded GCSE’s. Of children who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve top graded GCSEs, including English and maths. Attending school changes life chances.

As part of our commitment to supporting children’s attendance we will regularly communicate with you. If your child’s attendance reaches below 96% (our expectation of good attendance) we may ask for you to meet with us, so that home and school can work together, to ensure good attendance. Should your child’s attendance drop to 90% or below, we may ask for you to meet us with other agencies (ie the school nurse, Educational Welfare Officer or a family worker). These supportive steps help our understanding of why a child is not attending school regularly to prevent legal intervention. In the Autumn Term, a child’s attendance for the previous academic year will be considered before deciding on a course of action. From January onwards, the decision will be based on attendance data from the current academic year.

Please note each case is treated individually; we always consider the Equality Act of 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, if support is offered by the school but an attendance situation should not improve due to lack of engagement, we may have to make use of the parental responsibility measures outlined in the school policy, such as the involvement of the local authority and potentially legal intervention.

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Whilst we follow our attendance policy and procedures, work with the local authority and use the guidance in '[working together to improve school attendance](#)', we also welcome your contact should you need any advice or support with any aspect of attendance. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher in the first instance. If this is not possible you can contact the school attendance champion (who is the school secretary) secretary@***primary.co.uk (ie secretary@blislandprimary.co.uk).

As always, our main aim is to provide high quality support for each child. We look forward to working together throughout this academic year to improve overall attendance for all our children.

Yours sincerely
Bridge Schools Trust

Sam and Sammie

Good Attendance means...

Being in school at least 96% of the time
or 183 to 190 days

Remember
Your education is important - don't miss out!

Did you know?
A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance a child can achieve is 94.7%

School days in each academic year	Days of education	Days of absence	Attendance percentage
190	183	0 days absence	100%
		7 days absence	96%
	171	19 days absence	90%
		29 days absence	85%
	161	29 days absence	85%
		38 days absence	80%
	152	38 days absence	80%
		47 days absence	75%
	143	47 days absence	75%

Well done
A good attendance gives you the best chance for success

I'm worried
A poor attendance gives you less chance of success

I'm concerned
Very poor attendance has a serious impact and reduces life chances

There are **365** days in a calendar year
There are **175** days are not spent at school*
*So there's plenty of time for shopping, holidays and appointments!

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