



Important Attendance Message – September 2019 Every Day Counts!

Dear families, parents and carers

As you know good school attendance is essential to ensure that all children and young people make the most of available educational opportunities and achieve their full potential.

At Bowker Vale we are proud of our good attendance, during our most recent OfSTED inspection in July 2017 it was noted that "Attendance is above the national average".

Unfortunately our whole school attendance at the end of last school year (September 2018 to July 2019) was 94.8% which is quite a way below our target, and the national average, of 96%.

Thank you to the many pupils whose attendance was at, or above our target, and exceptionally well done to the 126 children who ended the year with attendance at 98% or above – joining our Excellent Attendance Club! However there were 225 pupils with attendance below 96%, meaning they were absent from school for 8 days or more, and 59 children ended the year with attendance below 90% putting them in the category of children persistently absent from school.

Disappointingly we have not had the positive start to attendance we were hoping for this term. There were 25 children absent from school on the first day of term and attendance so far is only 94.5%

Please take a few minutes to read through the information below.

If your child is unable to attend school

1. Telephone school on the first day of your child's absence to let us know why your child is not in school.
2. If your child has an appointment please show the appointment card to the office BEFORE the appointment. If possible appointments should be booked for after school or the school holidays.
3. If your child is going to be absent for more than one day please keep in contact with school, letting us know when you expect them to be well enough to return.

ALL absence must be recorded by school every day. They are recorded as:

Authorised Absence – where a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been given, for example

- Illness
- Medical Appointments (where the appointment card has been shown to school).
- Exceptional circumstances, such as a family bereavement when permission has been given by the Headteacher (see special leave of absence below)

Unauthorised Absence – where no satisfactory explanation has been given for a child's absence, for example

- A pupil's / family member's birthday
- Shopping or having a haircut
- Staying off school when a sibling is ill.



- “I slept in” or “I’m running late”. Arriving at school after 9.15 am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Where no reason is given we will contact you and may visit the home.
- Holidays taken in term time.

In all cases above your child will record an unauthorised absence, which may lead to statutory action. Please follow the steps above to make sure that we always know why your child is not in school.

Statutory Action – where a pupil records 5 sessions of unauthorised absence (2.5 days) then school will issue a Penalty Notice Advisory Letter to each parent / carer. If any further unauthorised absences are recorded then a request will be made to the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice Fine.

The Local Authority’s fine for a Fixed Penalty Notice is £120 per parent, per child reducing to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Unpaid fines or ongoing unauthorised absences may lead to prosecution by the Local Authority for failure to ensure regular school attendance.

Special leave of absence from school.

Although we understand how important it is for families to spend time together, we strongly request that you plan any leave outside school term-time.

There is no automatic right to take leave in term-time and it is only in special circumstances that a request for leave of absence will be agreed. You need to discuss any leave with school and complete the request form that is available from the school office. Please make sure the leave is agreed **before** making arrangements e.g. booking flights or accommodation.

These are the things we consider before agreeing to special leave:

- The reason for the leave and why it could not be taken in school holidays
- The number of days requested
- Previous requests for leave in term-time. Schools are advised by the local authority to grant no more than 20 days’ leave of absence in term-time over the whole of their primary school education. Please note there is no automatic right to take leave in term-time and no entitlement for up to 20 days.
- Your child’s attendance and punctuality record
- The time of year, e.g. test periods, the start of a new school year
- The impact of leave on your child’s learning

You need to be aware that it is a serious matter if you decide to take your child out of school without agreement from the headteacher:

- You can receive a Penalty Notice of £60 rising to £120
- You can receive a court summons, which can lead to a criminal record and a fine
- Your child may be at risk of losing their school place.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available from our school. If you have any specific queries in relation to this letter, or feel you need any advice or support please contact Mrs Orr or Mrs Griffin on the above number.

Copies of our School Attendance Policy and Manchester City Council Guideline on Leave of Absence are available on school’s website or you can ask at the school office.

We all want the very best for every child at our school and appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R Jacques
Headteacher

