

Bridport Area Schools

Our Attendance Policy 2019/20

What is an attendance policy?

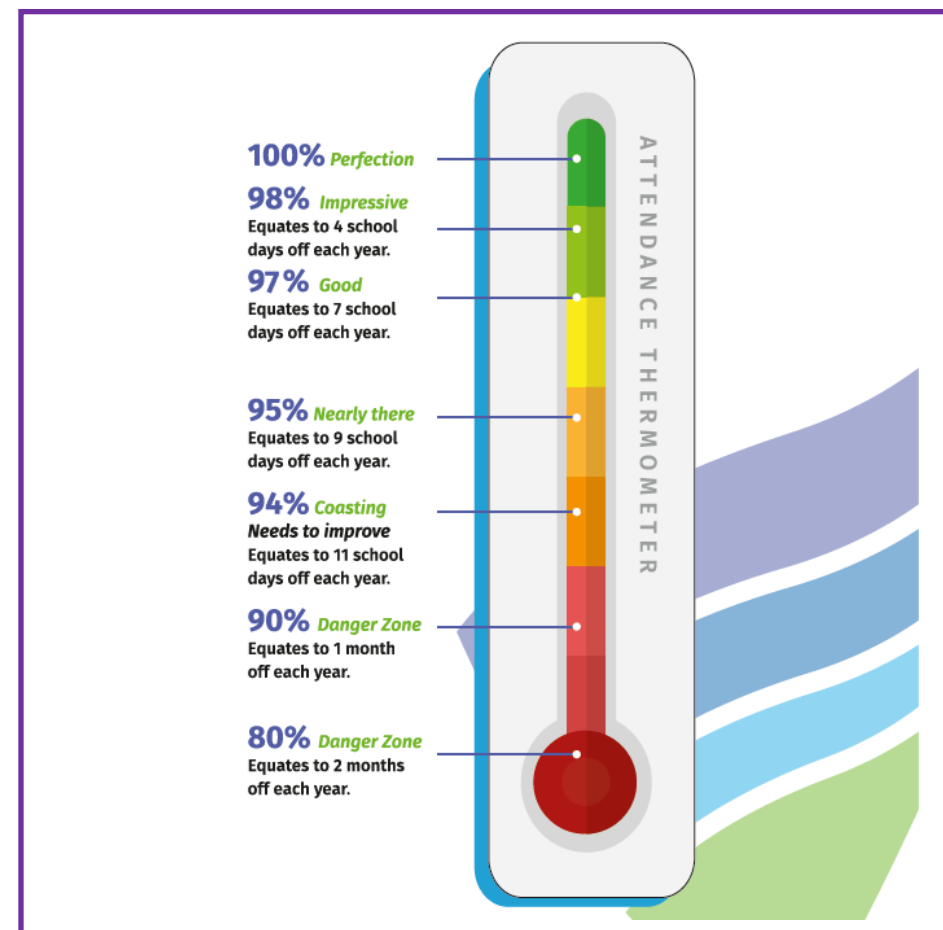
Under the Education Regulations 1995 the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present. The register must also indicate why a pupil is absent. Our policy aims to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and ensure the school's legal responsibility is met.

What is considered to be 'good' attendance?

Good attendance is considered above 95%, or approximately no more than one day of absence each half term. Regular and punctual attendance is essential for effective learning, promoting positive relationships and developing good attitudes to education. Research shows a strong link between a good history of attendance and achievement in GCSE exams.

What is an acceptable absence?

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason. Only the school can authorise an absence. An absence is classified as unauthorised when the school believes that a child is away from school without good reason; for example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours. School will not authorise an absence when no prior notice has been given to school, except in very exceptional circumstances.



Penalty Notices

Any absence which has not been authorised by your child's school will be recorded as "unauthorised". In line with Dorset Council policy, if a child has 5 days (10 sessions) or more of unauthorised holiday/absence within a period of 12 weeks, a penalty notice of £60 per parent may be issued by Dorset Council, which if not paid within 21 days will increase to £120. If this remains unpaid, parents can be prosecuted in the magistrates' court. A total of more than 5 days (10 sessions) unauthorised absence can also lead to prosecution.

Staff and parents will work together to ensure good attendance.

Parents will:

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time by 9.00am
- Ensure that any child arriving after the start of school accesses school via the main entrance
- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.30 am
- Contact the school in advance if their child will be absent for any reason (e.g. hospital appointment) – please note that it is expected that most appointments will occur outside school hours

School will:

- Take registration each morning and afternoon (two sessions per day)
- Consistently record reasons for absence and indicate whether the absence is authorised or not
- Record an attendance as 'late' after 9.30am; this means 'late after register closes' and is classified as an absence for the morning session
- Contact parents / carers on the first day of any absence if no reason is given by 9.30 am
- Contact parent / carer if attendance becomes a concern (below 95%) and invite parent / carer to school to discuss ways that attendance can be supported and improved
- Ensure that parents are aware that their child's attendance has the potential to become a concern by informing them if it falls below 95%.
- Liaise with the Dorset Council attendance officer where interventions have not resulted in an improvement in attendance within 6 weeks
- Schools will only grant applications for leave of absence in term time in exceptional circumstances

Working in Partnership

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. If you have any concerns about your child's attitude to school please talk to your child's class teacher.

How are attendance figures worked out?

A register is taken in school at 9.00am each morning and 1.00pm each afternoon. A child will receive a 'mark' for each session; these marks are totalled by school and given as a percentage (e.g. if a child attends school all week they will receive 100%; if a child is absent for one day they will have an attendance of 80% for that week).

How is lateness recorded?

If a child arrives in school after 9.30am the child is considered to have been 'absent' for the session.

Being frequently late for school also adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late is the same as being absent for 19 days a year