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BOWER GROVE SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PRACTICE

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School Census Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Board and Attendance Link Governor

The Governing Board and Attendance Link Governor is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance – ‘Attendance Champion’

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Attendance Champion responsible for attendance is Mr T Lawrence and can be contacted via office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk or 01622 726773

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher
- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is A Pulsford and can be contacted via office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk or 01622 726773.

3.5 Form Tutors

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis on Arbor, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

3.6 School Office Staff

School Office Staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Form Tutor or Head of Key Stage in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Contact class teacher, head of key stage or attendance officer if they require support or have attendance issues

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register on Arbor and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50 and will be kept open until 9.20. The register for the second session will be taken at 15.00 and will be kept open until 15.20.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff.

Telephone Number 01622 726773

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Contact School Office on 01622 726773 or office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Ongoing punctuality issues will result in discussion with home and possible further action

4.5 Following up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will follow the school pupil absence procedure (Appendix 2)
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Follow pupil absence procedure and escalate absence to safeguarding concern in line with this procedure. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Contact parents or carers; arrange meetings and liaise with local authority as appropriate (Appendix 3)

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly attendance reports (Appendix 4).

Pupil attendance will be incorporated in Annual Academic Reports and be reported in EHCP Review Meetings.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Exceptional Circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break

5.2 Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence).

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Bower Grove will monitor good attendance and reward positive attendance with

- Termly individual certificates
- Termly rewards including own clothes days and the attendance dice
- Attendance celebration for pupils on the 'Golden Table'
- Yearly 100% attendance celebration in assembly

7. Attendance Monitoring

Weekly reports and focused Leadership meetings twice per term analysing attendance by registration group, key stage and demographics.

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Provide weekly attendance reports to Class Teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Unauthorised, persistent or severe absence will be targeted with:

- Letters to home (Appendix 3)
- Parental meeting
- Liaison with local authority
- Close monitoring

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Board.

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

10. Special Circumstances

While leaders should apply this policy fairly and consistently, the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance will be considered, along with the school's obligations under the:

- Equality Act 2010: Guidance-Gov.UK (www.gov.uk)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

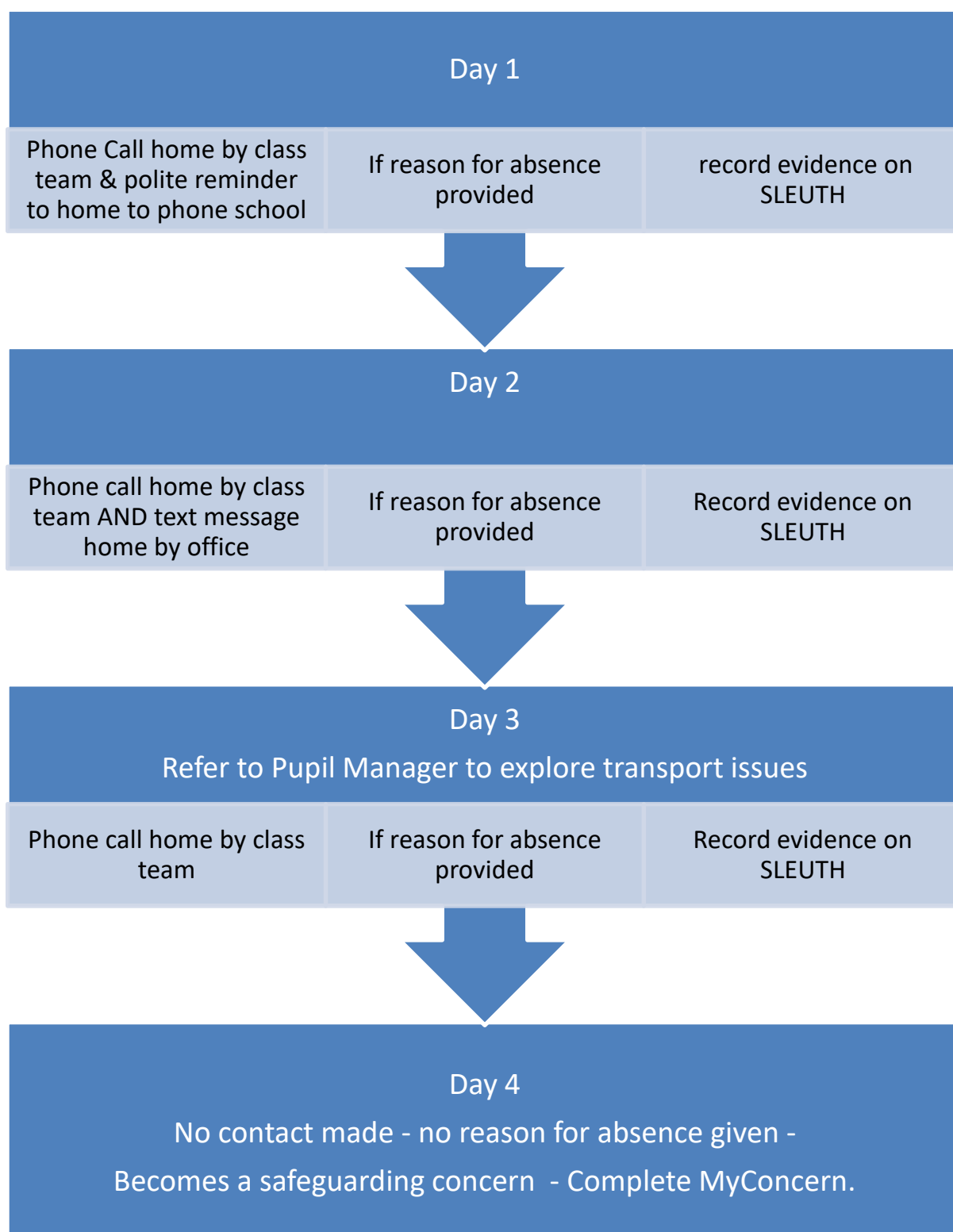
The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		

G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Pupil Absence Procedure



Appendix 3: Attendance Letter

Letter 1

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance - Ready to Learn

I am sure you will agree that in order for your child to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school every day.

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that _____'s attendance for this academic year to date is _____%.

Any time away from school could have a detrimental effect on both educational attainment and social development.

We hope that this reminder will help you to encourage your child to improve their attendance at school next term.

We ask that you as the parent /carer inform your child's transport before 8am and inform the school office on the first day of absence stating your child's name and reason for their absence, between 8am and 9am. On the following telephone number 01622 726773 alternatively by email office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk.

If you would like any support with your child's attendance or if you have any concerns you wish to discuss feel free to contact their class teacher in the first instance.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely
Assistant Headteacher

BOWER GROVE SCHOOL

Letter 2



Fant Lane
Maidstone
Kent
ME16 8NL

Telephone: 01622 726773

Headteacher: Mrs M Cleave

Email: headteacher@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance - Ready to Learn

I am sure you will agree that in order for your child to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school every day.

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that _____'s attendance for this academic year to date is _____.%. Regrettably, this has not improved since last term.

We ask that you as the parent /carer inform your child's transport before 8am and inform the school office on the first day of absence stating your child's name and reason for their absence, between 8am and 9am. On the following telephone number 01622 726773 alternatively by email office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk.

If you would like any support with your child's attendance or if you have any concerns you wish to discuss feel free to contact their class teacher in the first instance.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely
Assistant Headteacher



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Letter 3

BOWER GROVE SCHOOL



Fant Lane
Maidstone
Kent
ME16 8NL

Telephone: 01622 726773

Headteacher: Mrs M Cleave

Email: headteacher@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance - Ready to Learn

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that _____'s attendance for this academic year to date is _____%.

We would like to ask for you attend a school attendance meeting to discuss your child's attendance. Please arrange a time and day with our school office to meet with the head of key stage.

On the following telephone number 01622 726773 alternatively by email office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely
Assistant Headteacher



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Letter 4

BOWER GROVE SCHOOL



Fant Lane
Maidstone
Kent
ME16 8NL

Telephone: 01622 726773

Headteacher: Mrs M Cleave

Email: headteacher@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance - Ready to Learn

Thank you for attending the School meeting to discuss _____ attendance.

Please find the actions below that were discussed in the meeting.

-

We will continue to monitor _____ attendance and we hope that their attendance now improves and action by the local Authority will not be necessary.

Please feel free to contact the school on the following telephone number 01622 726773 alternatively by email office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely
Assistant Headteacher



Letter 5

BOWER GROVE SCHOOL



Fant Lane
Maidstone
Kent
ME16 8NL

Telephone: 01622 726773

Headteacher: Mrs M Cleave

Email: headteacher@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance - Ready to Learn

Regrettably you did not attend the attendance meeting as arranged on the _____

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that _____'s attendance for this academic year to date is _____%.

We would like to ask for you contact the school to rearrange and attend the school for a meeting on the following telephone number 01622 726773 alternatively by email office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk.

Further absences may lead to a request for a penalty notice and we as a school will need to inform the Local authority school liaison officer.

Yours sincerely
Assistant Headteacher



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Letter 6

BOWER GROVE SCHOOL



Fant Lane
Maidstone
Kent
ME16 8NL

Telephone: 01622 726773

Headteacher: Mrs M Cleave

Email: headteacher@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance - Ready to Learn

With reference to our letter of _____, _____ has now reached a total of _____ unauthorised absences.

We are given you notice that we are informing the Local authority where a referral for your child's absence will notified.

We would like to remind you that absences from school as a result of illness require a medical evidence will be authorised if you can provide (copy of prescription, medical/dental appointment card)

We would like to ask for you contact the school if you wish to discuss this matter on the following telephone number 01622 726773 alternatively by email office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely
Assistant Headteacher



Appendix 4: Termly Parental Attendance Update

BOWER GROVE SCHOOL



Fant Lane
Maidstone
Kent
ME16 8NL

Telephone: 01622 726773

Headteacher: Mrs M Cleave

Email: headteacher@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

Termly Attendance - Ready to Learn

For pupils to reach their full potential it is important that they attend school every day.

To give you the opportunity to monitor your child's attendance we would like to inform you that _____'s attendance for this academic year to date is currently _____%.

We are always striving for and encouraging 100% attendance from all pupils. If you would like any support with your child's attendance or if you have any concerns you wish to discuss feel free to contact their class teacher in the first instance.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards

Assistant Headteacher



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