



School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

'Forward thinking and creative; valuing faith, tradition, community and achievement'.

Introduction

- a. The staff and governors of Brigstock Latham's Primary School are committed to working with parents to ensure that all children in our school community receive full time education and maximise their chances to realise their full potential as learners. This can only be achieved if a child attends school regularly and is here on time every day ready to learn.
- b. However we do understand that children should not be at school if they are unwell. Therefore we set every child a target of a minimum of 95% attendance across an academic year.

Aims of the Policy

2. To explain the importance of good attendance in enabling children to reach their full potential as learners.
3. To make clear the school's expectations to parents, staff and governors for attendance levels.
4. To make clear the roles and responsibilities for parents and school staff in relation to managing attendance.
5. To communicate the legal position for school attendance and how the school will judge any absences to be authorised or unauthorised.
6. To explain how the school will review attendance and promote good attendance for children and their families.
7. To explain how the school will communicate with parents where attendance falls below the school's expectations.
8. It is a legal requirement that children of compulsory school age receive full time education and children need to attend school regularly. Irregular attendance at school leads to children missing important learning and consequently falling behind their peer group. There is a link between poor patterns of attendance and attainment: children who do not attend school regularly risk having poor levels of attainment.
9. Children who are allowed to miss school regularly also risk developing problems with social issues within school which can then lead into a spiral of further absences.
10. We take the issue of attendance very seriously and as a staff we review attendance once every 6 weeks and contact all parents in writing reporting their child's levels of attendance.

11. Attendance is a national priority and all schools have to submit data electronically every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school and it is an element of school data that is scrutinised by OFSTED. National Data shows a correlation between high levels of attendance and good attainment outcomes for children.

Acceptable Attendance

12. At the start of the academic year we set our children a target of a minimum of 95% attendance. From September 2015, the DfE set the threshold for persistent absence at 90%. This means that if a child's attendance falls below 90% then they are classed as persistently absent.
13. A school year consists of 39 weeks which totals 195 days that children should be in school. We measure in separate morning and afternoon sessions which amounts to 390 sessions in total. Consequently, for children to fall into the persistently absent category they have to miss over 39 sessions or be absent for over 19 and a half days over a school year.
14. When we monitor attendance we look for patterns of absence. If a child is away from school with an illness this is usually in the records as 1 or 2 days of absence and afterwards attendance returns to a regular pattern of unbroken weeks.
15. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern for us as a school as they sometimes indicate there are other reasons why the child is not attending school regularly. We will investigate any patterns of regular days or sessions being missed. If we believe there are reasons other than illness as to why a child is regularly absent we will contact parents or carers and may involve outside agencies.

Rights and Responsibilities

16. Improving attendance is the responsibility of all members of our school community.

Children

17. All children are expected to have good levels of attendance and arrive on time in the morning ready to learn. Some children may experience difficulties with attendance through a negative emotional response to school. Where this is the case, school staff will work closely with parents and the child to support them. Communication between school and the family will be a key element in reducing the number of days of absence.
18. If the problem persists, the school will contact outside agencies to help support the family.

Parents and Carers

19. The school presents its pupils with a curriculum that is creative and places emphasis on practical experiences for children. We ensure we communicate this to parents through newsletters, on the website and regular sharing assemblies. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly enabling them to make the most of the learning opportunities we offer.
20. We expect children to begin each session in a state of readiness to learn. Parents are responsible for ensuring that children are with us for the beginning of the school day; that their children have had a good night's sleep and they have had their breakfast.

We expect children to be adequately dressed in school uniform with the right clothing for the weather conditions.

21. If a child is going to be absent on any given day we expect that parents must notify the school office. They must do this before 9:00am which is the official start time of the registration period. Parents should telephone between 8:30am and 9:00am and no later than 9:30am. If a child is absent and no telephone call has been received, the school office will contact parents on the telephone. If there is no response, the office will continue to ring through the school day. If we are unable to contact a parent a letter will be sent to the home address.
22. If after the second day of absence there is still no contact explaining why the child is absent, a second letter will be delivered to the family home. If this continues and a child is absent after 5 days without any contact from parents or carers, two members of staff will visit the family home. Failure to contact the school after 10 days will result in the child being referred to the Educational Inclusion and Partnerships as being 'missing from education.'
23. A telephone call should be made by the parent on each day the child is absent unless it is known by the school in advance how long the absence will be. This will have been communicated to the school office in writing.
24. A note or letter from a parent does not automatically make the absence authorised. Parents should avoid making medical and dental appointments in school time. Absences may be authorised for emergency circumstance such as bereavements or for medical appointments that have to be made during the school day.

School

25. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff and staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Staff will provide a high quality learning environment in which children feel valued and welcomed. Staff meet parents on the playground and welcome children into school every morning. Children who are late are recorded in a late book in the school office.
26. Staff will discuss any concerns about punctuality or attendance during autumn term or spring term parents' evenings. All parents are sent a copy of their child's register marks in the end of year written report.

Dealing with Absence

27. The school can request the Education Inclusion and Partnerships to take action through the Children Missing in Education Team. If necessary the Local Authority can take action under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984). Parents found guilty of failing to ensure regular attendance of their child at a school under Section 444, 1/1A Education Act 1996 can be fined up to £2500 and/or receive a term of imprisonment.

Education Inclusion and Partnerships

28. The Education Inclusion and Partnership acts to champion the right of all children to receive their entitlement to an education. They ensure that the Local Authority meets their statutory duties in relation to:
 29. School Attendance
 30. Elective home education
 31. Child welfare

32. Children missing in education
33. Behaviour for learning and exclusion from school
34. The school will liaise with the Education Inclusion and Partnership if they have concerns over a child being absent from school.

Dealing with absence - Family Holidays

35. If a child has a 'one off' unauthorised absence such as a family holiday taken without approval, the school can report the family to the Education Inclusion and Partnership team who may enforce a penalty notice. Penalty Notices are fines of £60 (per parent per child) imposed on parents. If a child's attendance falls below the 90% mark due to this holiday; is a cause for concern or there are past patterns of attendance that are a cause for concern, the Head Teacher will report the family to the Education Inclusion and Partnership.
36. If the Head Teacher refers the family to the Education Inclusion and Partnership, he will notify them in a telephone call explaining the reasons behind the referral. Further meetings with parents regarding the referral are at the discretion of the Head Teacher.
37. The Local Authority publishes a Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for persistent absence which is published online.

Requesting Family Holidays

38. The school needs written notification of holiday requests stating clearly the dates of any planned absence. Written notification must be given to the school at least ten school days before the planned absence. On receiving the request, the school will look at current levels of attendance and past patterns of attendance in relation to previous requests for holidays.
39. The school will respond in writing to the request with details of the child's current level of attendance and how the proposed holiday will impact on those levels.
40. If current attendance levels or previous patterns of attendance are a cause for concern we will inform parents of our intention to make the referral to the Education Inclusion Partnership.
41. If parents do not inform us in writing about their planned holidays we will automatically refer them to the Education Inclusion Partnership.

Dealing with Absence - Persistent Absence

42. The school will review attendance data once every term (approximately 6 school weeks). At the end of the review all parents will receive a letter outlining their child's percentage attendance which is measured from the beginning of the academic year.
43. Children whose attendance falls below the 92% mark will receive a letter and a copy of their child's register mark with the expectation that their child's attendance will improve before the next review. If a child's attendance has not improved at the next review point, the parent will be invited in to discuss their child's attendance with the Head Teacher and class teacher where necessary. During the meeting the school will look for ways to actively support the family in improving their child's attendance.
44. If on further reviews the attendance has not improved a second meeting will be arranged where the school will explain that a referral could be made to the Education Inclusion and Partnership as a case of persistent absence. At this second meeting the

school will present the parents with a Parenting Contract. This contract will set a clear, achievable target for the child's attendance over a shorter period of a term. During this meeting, dates will be set to review progress in meeting the attendance targets in the Parenting Contract.

Dealing with Absence - Authorised Absence

45. A child's absence will be authorised if the absence falls into one of the following categories:
46. Illness or when a child is receiving medical attention.
47. Days of religious observance.
48. Absence due to a family circumstance (bereavement or serious illness).
49. There are other absences such as an 'Approved Sporting Activity' that can be authorised. For some children there will be an educational reason that they are absent from school which include music exams or working in another school setting. These absences may be authorised after consultation with the Head Teacher.
50. Parents should contact the school office well in advance of any proposed absence and speak to the Head Teacher about the planned activity. Requests for any planned absences must be made in writing to the school. The Head teacher will decide whether to authorise the absence and will inform parents of his decision in writing.

Punctuality - Registration

51. Registration is a key point of safeguarding and is a legal requirement. Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
52. Morning registration will be open from 9:00am. If children arrive before or during registration they can be marked present by the teacher and the register closed. Children who are not present at this point will be marked as 'N'. Children arriving after the close of register will be marked 'L' by the office staff, their names and minutes late will be recorded in the late book. After 9:30am the school office will begin telephoning parents who have not reported their child as being absent. At 9:30am the office staff will finalise marks in the registers.
53. If a child arrives late after the registration period, they will be signed in the late book by the school bursar/secretary. Any reasons for lateness will be recorded in the book.

Punctuality - Persistent Lateness

54. Persistent late arrivals will be monitored by the class teacher who will then inform the Head Teacher of their concerns. Lateness will be monitored termly (every 6 weeks) alongside attendance. If there is a pattern of lateness which becomes a cause for concern, parents will be written to informing them of the number of late marks for their child and how many lesson minutes have been lost through arriving late.
55. We will continue to monitor lateness and expect to see an improvement. If during the next round of monitoring there is no improvement in punctuality we will then invite parents into school for a meeting with the Head and Class Teacher.

Monitoring

56. The school monitors attendance every term (6 weeks). During this process, we look for children whose attendance levels fall below 93% and write to those parents informing of their child's attendance levels.

57. We look for improvements in attendance and write to those parents informing them of the improvements in their child's attendance record.
58. We focus on children who have fallen below 90% and especially on those children with consistently low attendance rates. If attendance does not improve we write to these parents and invite them in to discuss issues and follow the procedures set out in this policy.
59. If a child has been ill for a long period or we are aware of any other sensitive circumstances around attendance issues, we telephone parents and invite them in to discuss at a face to face level. For children with ongoing medical problems our priority is supporting the family, working together to improve attendance. Each case will be dealt with to ensure the best learning outcomes for the child.
60. Attendance data is reported to the Governing Body as a matter of course through the Head Teacher's Report.

Revised February 2016

Adopted by the Governing Body

On.....

Signed..... (Chair of Governors)

Review Date.....