



Bramcote Hills Primary School

School Attendance Policy

At Bramcote Hills Primary School, we believe that:

- pupils need to attend school regularly so they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available
- poor attendance rates and persistent lateness undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.

Aims

Therefore, we aim to:

1. take all reasonable steps to maximise attendance rates
2. actively discourage late arrival

Legal Framework

The Pupils Registration Regulations 1956, 1991 and 2006 state that every school should keep an attendance register. The school also acknowledges the amendments made to the act in 2013. Registers are therefore legal documents and must be completed accurately and in accordance with these regulations and the advice issued in DES Circular 11/91. Attendance details are recorded on the school's computerised administration system which enables easier data analysis.

1. Parental Responsibility

- 1.1 Parents are required to ensure that their children receive full time education and are therefore primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend and stay at school.
- 1.2 Thus, parents are responsible for ensuring that their children:
 - attend school regularly
 - arrive at school on time, in uniform and in a condition to learn.
 - are absent only for reasons that can be authorised.
- 1.3 Parents are required to inform the school of the reason for any absence and the likely return date, as soon as possible.
- 1.4 Warning letters will be issued and/or parents will be contacted by the Head Teacher or Attendance Officer if regular attendance becomes a concern.

- 1.5 In extreme cases, the school would use the services of the LA Attendance enforcement team to ensure good attendance.

2. Registration

- 2.1 The school keeps a computerised attendance register for each class in which pupils are marked present or absent at the beginning of each school session.
- 2.2 The system is managed using *Scholarpack*. Procedures for recording attendance are included in the Staff Handbook.

3. Reporting Absence

- 3.1 It is essential that parents make contact on the first day of absence, - by note, personal contact, telephone call or e-mail - informing the school of the reason for the absence and/or nature of any illness. If this is not received, office staff will try to contact parents in order to ascertain the whereabouts of the child. Parents are also asked to inform the school if there is a likely return date.
- 3.2 Notes received by teachers are dated and initialled and sent to the office to be retained until the end of the academic year. The absence is logged as either an Authorised Absence or Unauthorised Absence.
- 3.3 Telephone messages and personal contacts made to the school office are noted on Scholarpack and subsequently logged as either Authorised Absence or Unauthorised Absence.
- 3.4 Personal contacts made with class teachers should subsequently be logged on Scholarpack or the message should be passed on to the office staff for recording.
- 3.5 Any absence that may be considered Unauthorised Absence should only be recorded after discussion with the Head Teacher or Attendance Officer. Any queries as to whether to authorise an absence or not should be referred to the Head Teacher or Attendance Officer.

4. Authorising Absence

- 4.1 Previous regulations regarding approving absences (particularly those caused by family holidays) no longer apply. Absences will only be authorised if they are caused by genuine illness or by 'exceptional circumstances'.

Any application for term time absences caused by exceptional circumstances must be made in writing to the Head Teacher or Attendance Officer at least four weeks prior to the event if possible. The application will be considered by the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer and a response given within three working days. Current rates of attendance will be considered and each application will be considered individually.

If, at this point, parents/carers wish to appeal against the decision, they should put their case in writing within 10 working days to be addressed to the Chair of Governors of the school. This appeal will be considered by a designated governor on behalf of the Chair. A final response will be issued after a further 10 working days.

Unauthorised absences will be recorded on a child's ongoing record and will be passed on to their next school. At the termly Full Governing Body meetings the Head Teacher will

report on issues affecting levels of attendance in school and extended levels of unauthorised absence in light of the 2013 guidance.

The following codes are used to record absence:

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday not agreed
H	Family holiday agreed
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late before registers close
M	Medical/Dental
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late after registers close
V	Educational visit
W	Work Experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence

- 4.2 Absence will be authorised immediately or retrospectively if:
- the pupil was absent due to genuine illness
 - the pupil was prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
 - the pupil had leave of absence granted by the Head Teacher or Attendance Officer
 - the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
 - the absence was due to a medical or irregular dental appointment. NB It should be noted that the school considers that standard optician and dentist appointments should be made out of school times and do not constitute exceptional circumstances. However, appointments at the doctors, hospital and orthodontist can be harder to arrange and these may be authorised in some cases. Parents will be asked to provide a copy of the appointment letters/cards.
- 4.3 In addition, the school will consider authorising absence in the following cases:
- family bereavement
 - external music or other examination
 - special tuition/events.
 - Family weddings.

The school may ask for proof of attendance at the above e.g. exam notification, copy of wedding

invitation and sight of a dated photograph of the child at the wedding. All photos sent digitally will be deleted after sight by the Head Teacher or Attendance Officer. This is not done to accuse each family of potentially being untruthful but to help us be consistent in possibly authorising absences.

5. Lateness

- 5.1 We recognise that persistent lateness
- is detrimental to the child's education
 - is administratively disruptive
 - is a poor preparation for future schooling and adult life.
- 5.2 Pupils arriving after the register has been completed (8.50) will be marked as late before registration closes. They will need report to the main school office so that they can be registered as late. (This will be denoted as an 'L' on the registration system)
- 5.3 Pupils arriving after the register is closed (9.00), must also report to the school office so that they can be registered as late after registration has closed. (This will be recorded as a 'U' on the school registration system).
- 5.4 Parents whose children regularly arrive late will receive a warning letter from school. Extreme cases may be referred to the LA Attendance Enforcement Team.

6. Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures

- 6.1 It is recognised that children may arrive or depart mid-session for a variety of reasons which may be authorised:
- illness or accident in school resulting in a child going home
 - medical or irregular dental appointments
 - unavoidable delays.
- 6.2 Pupils present for registration who leave early, or for part of a session, should be noted on the *Mid-Session Arrivals/Departure Log* in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. *The register itself is not altered.*
- 6.3 Pupils not present for registration who return later from an appointment should be noted on the *Mid-Session Arrivals/Departure Log* in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. The register is subsequently amended to authorise the absence or record an unauthorized absence.

7. Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

- 7.1 The Attendance Officer generates Scholarpack absence reports which are examined at the end of each week and month to look for:
- patterns of unexplained absences
 - any persistent lateness
 - any prolonged absence
 - any unexplained patterns of authorised absence
- The attendance of disadvantaged groups of children is monitored on a weekly basis. The attendance of children who are Looked After, Child Protection concerns or attendance concerns is monitored on a daily basis.

7.2 Issuing a Penalty Notice

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances where the parent is judged

capable of securing their child's regular punctuality and attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. This includes where families take a holiday during term time.

In the vast majority of instances, penalty notices will be the last resort where all other efforts to address non-attendance or poor punctuality have failed. A letter, warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued will normally be sent when a family is causing significant cause for concern.

A fixed term penalty notice may be issued when a child has had more than 6 unauthorised absences (3 days) or has been late 10 times in any rolling 6 week period (this period consists of school weeks and can run on both sides of a school holiday). The penalty is set at £120 and should be paid within 42 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60. The penalty will be issued per child, per parent once within any rolling 6 week period. A parent is considered to be someone who has parental responsibility or an adult with whom the child lives on a regular basis. The notice is payable to the Local Authority.

For example, if a family with two adults and two children take both children out of school for 5 days, the fine would be £480 (£240 if paid within 28 days).

For example, if a single parent took two children for the same amount of time by him/herself, the other parent would not be charged. The fine for the single parent taking the children out of school would be £240 (£120 if paid within 28 days).

When determining whether a penalty notice should be issued the school will consider a range of factors including:

- Whether a child is classified as being (or has been in the past) a persistent absentee with an attendance figure of less than 90%
- Whether a child has (or has had in previous years) an attendance figure of below 95%
- Whether there is a noticeable pattern of non-attendance or lateness
- Whether there is a history of taking unauthorised holidays in term time
- Whether the parent is making every effort to ensure good attendance (this does not include simply calling school to say that their child is unwell)
- If the school believes that a parent/carer has given incorrect information, it is entitled to ask for evidence for that absence or lateness
- This may or may not prevent families taking holidays but calling school to say that their child is unwell. If school has good reason to believe a child is not unwell, a penalty notice may still be issued

7.3 **Summaries of Attendance** rates are prepared annually for all children as part of the Annual Report to Parents stating:

- the child's percentage attendance rate throughout the year
- the number of authorised absences
- the number of unauthorised absences

Children's attendance figures for the previous term are provided for parents in the first newsletters of the Spring and Summer terms.

7.4 An **Attendance and Punctuality Report** is drawn up annually for governors outlining the attendance and punctuality rates for each academic year together with comparisons with

- 7.5 Attendance figures are collated and analysed monthly in order to identify any concerns and ensure swift intervention
- 7.6 A parents' information leaflet ***Promoting School Attendance*** is issued to families if the school identifies issues surrounding attendance and punctuality.
- 7.7 **Children Missing in Education (CME)** The school takes its responsibility for Safeguarding very seriously. It is a serious safeguarding issue when children go 'missing' between schools or through poor attendance. The school is aware of the CME flowchart and the CME team at the LA (headed by Glen Scruby at the time of writing). The school follows this guidance when dealing with such cases.

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