



## **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
- good school attendance is everyone's responsibility.

#### **Aims**

Therefore, we aim to:

- take all reasonable steps to maximise attendance rates
- reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- act early to address patterns of absence
- build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- promote and support punctuality in school.

#### **Legal Framework**

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE's **Working Together to Improve School Attendance** (August 2024) 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) 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

### **1. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **1.1 The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- ensuring that school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties;
- regularly reviewing and challenging school leaders regarding attendance data;
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school;
- ensuring that staff receive adequate training on managing attendance;
- holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The link governor responsible for attendance is the chair of governors although s/he may delegate monitoring activities to other governors.

## 1.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy across school;
- monitoring school absence and reporting this 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.

## 1.3 The Attendance Officer (Senior Attendance Champion)

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school;
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes;
- Analysing attendance on a monthly basis and identifying trends;
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher;
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues;
- Devising specific strategies to address poor attendance, at an individual, group or school level, identified through data;
- Working with the Local Authority Education Enforcement Team to tackle persistent absence;
- Advising the headteacher about when to issue fixed penalty notices;
- Sending attendance letters to families who are causing concern;

The attendance officer is **Mrs Sue Hewes** and can be contacted via 0115 9179226 and/or [suehewes@bramcotehills.notts.sch.uk](mailto:suehewes@bramcotehills.notts.sch.uk)

## 1.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance correctly on a daily basis, using the correct codes;
- Submitting attendance information via ScholarPack in a timely manner;
- Reporting any attendance concerns about pupils to the attendance officer.

## 1.5 Office Administrative Assistant

The Office Administrative Assistant is responsible for:

- taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis;
- recording absence information on the school system;
- checking that absences are recorded correctly, using the correct codes, as directed by the attendance officer;
- contacting parents and carers who have not already informed the school of a child's absence, by 9.30am;
- referring any attendance concerns to the attendance officer;
- ensuring that attendance letters are posted and copies of documentation stored in pupil folders.

## 1.6 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ensure that their child attends and stays at school every day, except when a statutory reason applies;
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time, in uniform and in a condition to learn;
- ensure that their child is only absent for reasons that can be authorised;
- contact the school (by telephone or email) before 8:30am on the first and every subsequent day of

- absence, giving the reason for absence;
- provide the school with at least two emergency contacts for their child;
- ensure that, routine appointments (e.g. medical and dentist appointments) are made outside of the school day.

## **2. Recording Attendance**

### **The Attendance Register**

- 2.1 The school uses ScholarPack Management Information System as the means of recording attendance, and places all pupils on this register.
- 2.2 The attendance register is taken by class teachers at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions of each school day, using the DFE attendance codes (see appendix 1). This is checked by the office administrative assistant.
- 2.3 Class teachers and the office administrative assistant will record any information provided by parents and carers about the reasons for any absences.
- 2.4 The attendance register will be kept for 6 years after the date on which an entry was made.

### **Recording Absence**

- 2.5 The school will mark absences due to illness as authorised, unless there is genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- 2.6 If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school will ask the pupil's parent or carer to provide medical evidence of the illness e.g. doctor's note, appointment card or prescription.
- 2.7 If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- 2.8 Absence for urgent or specialist medical appointments will be authorised as long as the school is notified in advance of the appointment, by telephone or email. We encourage routine appointments to be made 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 school will request proof of the medical appointment made.
- 2.9 If a child has been absent for fifteen consecutive school days through illness, the school will notify the Local Authority.
- 2.10 Where a pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, stops attending without reason or school has a concern the school will:
  - attempt to make contact with the child's named emergency contacts on a daily basis as soon as possible
  - record the absence as unauthorised until more information is obtained;
  - make a home visit to the child's address and leave a 'calling card';
  - follow the 'Children Missing In Education' flowchart procedures (see appendix 2).

## **3. Punctuality and Lateness**

- 3.1 We recognise that persistent lateness:
  - is detrimental to a child's education and their potential for achieving to the best of their ability;
  - is a poor preparation for future schooling and adult life
  - is administratively disruptive.

- 3.2 Pupils arriving after the register has been completed (8.40) 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)
- 3.3 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).
- 3.4 **Late Letters** will be issued to the parents/carers of those children whose punctuality is causing concern. The letters will state the number of minutes of education lost due to arriving late. A period of monitoring will follow this to ensure that punctuality improves.
- 3.5 Extreme cases of persistent and/or significant lateness may be referred to the Local Authority Education Enforcement Team and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.

#### 4. Authorising Absence and Holidays in Term Time

- 4.1 There has been revised statutory guidance regarding approving absences and a national threshold for penalty notices.  
Absences will only be authorised if they are caused by genuine illness or by 'exceptional circumstances'. Holidays should not be taken in term time. 'Exceptional circumstances' do not include holidays being cheaper in term time, the length of time since a previous holiday, that a holiday has been arranged by another family member or other situations deemed to be not exceptional by the school.
- 4.2 Any application for term time absences must be made in writing to the Head Teacher or Attendance Officer at least **four weeks** prior to the event, if possible, and should detail the reasons for the absence request. 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, including the length of time the pupil is to be absent for.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 Absence will be authorised immediately 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 apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong and if the school had been informed of this prior to the absence. We expect this would be for no more than one day. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
  - traveller pupils are travelling for occupational purposes. 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.
- 4.6 Extended absences will not be authorised retrospectively. In a case where a holiday has been taken in term time and the school has not been notified in advance, the school may still issue a fixed penalty notice

retrospectively.

In addition, the school may consider authorising absence in the following cases:

- family bereavement;
- external music or other examinations;
- special tuition/events;
- representation in significant sporting or cultural events;(which may not necessarily include modelling) (a pupil involved in modelling will require a licence from the Local Authority)
- family weddings
- additional school transition events
- participation in regulated performances (paid or unpaid) in line with a license issued by a Local Authority, as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative impact on a pupil's education.

4.7 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. Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures

5.1 It is recognised that children may arrive or depart mid-session for a variety of reasons, which may be authorised. These include:

- illness or accident in school resulting in a child going home;
- medical or specialist dental appointments;
- unavoidable delays.

5.2 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.*

5.3 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 unauthorised absence.

## 6. Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

6.1 The Attendance Officer generates Scholarpack absence reports which are analysed at the end of each month to look for:

- patterns of unexplained absences;
- any persistent lateness;
- any prolonged absence;
- any unexplained patterns of authorised absence;
- any trends in attendance data in specific groups of pupils.

6.2 The attendance of disadvantaged groups of children is monitored on a weekly basis. The attendance of children who are Looked After, have Child Protection concerns or have attendance concerns, is monitored daily.

6.3 The **Attendance Team** (Headteacher, Deputy Head, Attendance Officer and Home Liaison Worker) meet fortnightly to discuss attendance issues and decide possible actions and support. This includes discussing all children whose attendance is below 90% and are, therefore, classed as persistent absentees.

6.4 **Attendance reports** are issued biannually for all families at parents' evenings. Class

teachers also discuss any attendance and punctuality concerns at these meetings.

6.5 Attendance data is also included as part of a child's **Annual Report to Parents** stating:

- the child's percentage attendance rate throughout the year;
- the number of authorised absences;
- the number of unauthorised absences;
- the number of authorised and unauthorised late marks.

6.6 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 the LA and nationally.

## 7. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

7.1 The school is rigorous in promoting the link between good school attendance and improving outcomes for all children. Strategies for ensuring this include:

- a whole-school ethos that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- robust daily processes for following up attendance;
- a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving school attendance;
- proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and ensuring swift intervention;
- celebrating good attendance in assemblies and offering additional activities for year groups that have the best attendance each week.

7.2 When concerns over poor attendance arise, the school offers a number of strategies to support families to improve attendance. These include:

- alerting families early when attendance concerns arise;
- offering meetings with parents to discuss and understand any barriers to attendance.
- targeting intervention and support for families with attendance concerns. Support would be bespoke, depending on individual circumstances – some strategies could be short term to assist a child's attendance to 'get back on track' and establish good routines before withdrawing support. The strategies could include devising a 'soft start' approach and putting in place incentives for children to attend on time

In some cases, it might not be possible or appropriate to put a support strategy in place and the responsibility might lie entirely with the family. This might be the case when families have not always been honest and accurate with school when reporting absences or when they have not completed previously agreed steps.

- using Traffic Light Letters to highlight the impact that poor attendance can have on progress;
- meeting with the parent to devise an 'attendance contract' to highlight specific tasks for home and school
- carrying out home visits.

7.3 The school works closely with other agencies, including the Local Authority and other partners, to provide targeted support to improve and maintain attendance. These include:

- completing a **Early Help Assessment Form** to enable access to targeted support services;
- support from **Healthy Families Team**, including support in the home;
- obtaining advice from the **Local Authority Attendance Enforcement Team**;
- offering support and advice from the school's **Home Liaison Worker**, including regular telephone support and meetings with parents/carers;
- devising **Individual Healthcare Plans** for children whose attendance is affected by severe medical needs;
- referring and discussing pupils at **School Behaviour and Attendance Partnership** meetings.

## 8. Issuing a Penalty Notice



- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 In the majority of instances, penalty notices will be the last resort (not in case of holidays taken in term time) 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 be sent when a family is causing significant cause for concern. There may also be a formal period of attendance monitoring before a penalty notice is issued.
- 8.3 A **fixed penalty notice** may be issued when a child has had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences (1 session =  $\frac{1}{2}$  day) or has been late (after registers close) 10 times in any rolling 10 week period (this period consists of school weeks and can run on both sides of a school holiday). The penalty is set at £160 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 £80. The penalty will be issued per child, per parent once within any rolling 10 week period. If a penalty notice is issued twice within a rolling three year period, there is no option for a reduced rate. A parent is considered to be someone who has parental responsibility or an adult with whom the child lives on a regular basis. Therefore, fixed penalty notices may be issued to both separated parents. The notice is payable to the Local Authority. Failure to pay the fixed penalty notice could result in prosecution. If there have been two fixed penalty notices issued within a three-year rolling period, then instead of a third fixed penalty notice being issued, the Local Authority could refer the case for legal action.
- For example, if a family with two adults and two children take both children out of school for 5 days, the fine would be £640 (£320 if paid within 28 days (reduced amount only available on first fixed penalty notice)).
- 8.4 When determining whether a penalty notice should be issued the school will consider a range of factors including: (These may not apply in cases where holidays have been taken in term time):
- has a 'notice to improve' and/or attendance contract been issued to the parent/carers
  - 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 the parent is making every effort to ensure good attendance (this does not include simply calling school to say that their child is unwell);
  - the timing of the absence request e.g. we would not usually authorise absences at the beginning of the school year or during statutory assessment periods.
- 8.5 If the school believes that a parent/carers has given incorrect information, it is entitled to ask for evidence for that absence or lateness.
- 8.6 The school follows the Local Authority Education and Attendance Team guidance on issuing fixed penalty notices. This includes issuing warning letters before any unauthorised absences are taken, stating that a fixed penalty notice may be issued, and warning of the potential for prosecution in the future. A letter is also sent to inform parents when a penalty notice has been requested from the Local Authority. Letters are sent to both parents, where applicable.

## 9. Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

**9.1 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;
- discuss all pupils who are classed as persistent or severe absentees at the fortnightly attendance meeting;

- inform parents by letter when their child is classed as a persistent absentee if there is a cause for concern;
- hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of persistent or severely absent pupils to discuss how attendance can be improved;
- provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

Policy updated September 2024

## Appendix 1 - Pupil Attendance Codes

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (not dual registration)
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Authorised absence for performing in plays etc (performance certificate needed) if agreed by the school
C1	Authorised absence for modelling, if agreed by the school
D	Dual registered (at another establishment) - not counted in possible attendances
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
J	Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
M	Authorised absence due to medical/ dental appointments
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
P	Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances
	or
	Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances **
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - not counted in possible attendances **

The following attendance codes are used for monitoring attendance in systems but are not counted as part of national attendance statistics.

• **Attendance code 'Y':** Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances – not counted in possible attendances. Whilst this code is included in the census collection it is not included in possible sessions and is excluded from counts of absences and not included in national attendance statistics. There are different categories of Y code.

• **Attendance code 'D':** Dual registered (at another educational establishment) – not counted in possible





attendances. This code is used for monitoring attendance in systems. Whilst this code is included in the census collection it is not included in possible sessions or absence figures

- **Attendance code 'X':**

a) Non-compulsory school age absence – not counted in possible attendances. This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

- **Attendance Code '#':** Planned whole or partial school closure – not counted in possible attendances. This code should be used for planned whole or partial school closures where the dates are known to the school at least a term in advance. This code is not collected in the census.

## Appendix 2 – Children Missing in Education Flowchart

### GUIDANCE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND BUSINESS MANAGERS WHERE CHILDREN ARE AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION

