



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Aims and Objectives
3. Statutory Duty
4. Parental Responsibility and/or day to day care
5. Local Authority Responsibility
6. School Day/Punctuality
7. Reporting an Absence/First day Absence
8. Authorising Absences
9. Medical Notes and Supporting evidence
10. Roles and Responsibilities in Managing Attendance
11. School Interventions for Managing Persistent Absenteeism
12. Pupil Support in Long Term Absenteeism
13. Attendance Rewards
14. Requests for Leave of Absence During Term Time
15. Deletion from Register
16. School Attendance Focused Target
17. Monitoring and Review
18. Relationships to Other Policies

Appendix 1: Equivalent Attendance Rates

1. Introduction

The staff and Governors at Brookvale Primary School are committed to ensuring the highest possible school attendance for all its pupils. We understand that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Our aim at Brookvale is quite simple. We will work alongside parents and families to endeavour that pupil attendance is well above the national average. We will do this so that we can ensure that our children have the best possible chance to achieve at school and that they can begin their adult lives with at least the same chances as those others they will be competing with in their future lives of training and employment.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives and policy are to:

- To emphasise the importance of and secure from pupils, maximum attendance at school to enable them to take full advantage of their education opportunities and learning experiences.
- To make explicit to all relevant parties the school's expectations over Attendance levels;
- To promote a consistent approach across the school to all matters relating to attendance;
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance;
- To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised";
- To stress the need for home and the school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance and punctuality.
- Record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism;
- Promote effective partnership with services and agencies and follow their standard approaches in managing attendance issues.

3. Statutory Duty

Schools are responsible for recording pupils attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

4. Parental Responsibility and/or day to day care

The Education Act 1996 section 7 defines the Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

(7) The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,*
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The Education Act 1996 section 576 defines the meaning of “parent”.

(1) In this Act, unless the context of otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person-

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or*
- (b) who has care of him,*
except that in section 499(8) it only includes such a person if he is an individual.

5. Local Authority Responsibility

If a child of compulsory school age fails to regularly attend the school which he/she is registered at, then the parent/guardian is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at schools, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend can be prosecuted under Education Act 1996, section 444 1A (as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). 5.2 Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced new powers in relation to issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004. Penalty notices must be issued in a manner which conforms to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all relevant Equal Opportunities Legislation. To this aim each Local Authority has a Code of Conduct in relation to issuing Penalty Notices.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. Brookvale School recognises Birmingham City Council’s ‘Spotlight on Attendance Campaign’ and will implement prosecution where it is fair and equitable to do so. Brookvale School in accordance with the regulations regarding pupils’ attendance at school, keeps an attendance register on which at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session pupils are marked present or absent. The marks are electronically processed and stored on the schools central administrative system- SIMS. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the schools admissions roll.

There are a number of sanctions that school can take to address the issue of non-attendance. In order to try and identify the reason for absence we will always talk to you first to identify the reason for absence. Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further absence has occurred following written warning to improve Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Birmingham City Council Code of Conduct.

Where intervention through the ‘Spotlight’ process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child’s attendance at school.

6. School Day and Punctuality

Brookvale's school day begins at 8.45am. All pupils arriving 10 minutes after the start of each session will be coded as authorised late (L code). (Registration is taken in the afternoon at 1.15pm). At each registration session any child not present is marked as absent. If the child subsequently arrives after 9.30 a.m. the child is marked as unauthorised late (U code) unless a valid reason is supplied.

7. Reporting Absences/First Day Absence

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform the school by 8.45am on the first day of their child's absence that their child will not be in school for that day. If by 10am on the first day of a child's absence the school has not been notified, the Attendance Officer will ensure a text message is sent to the parent/carer informing them that the child is absent without reason and to contact school immediately.

It is important that parents/carers stay in regular contact with school during the absence period. If no communication is received from the parent/carer by 8.45am, the school will endeavour to contact them that day. If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer.

By the end of the second day of absence, the school may send a letter of concern to the parent/carer and/or invite them into the school and/or may undertake a home visit if appropriate.

8. Authorising Absences

There are two categories of absence:-

- (i) Authorised (approved)
- (ii) Unauthorised (not approved)

Only the Headteacher or Designated Officer can approve absence.

(i) Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, if the child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

(ii) Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

When completing the weekly absence report forms, teachers will record the relevant category of absence. Where the teacher is unsure of the category of absence the Headteacher will decide on the evidence provided. Their decision will be made after referring to guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE).

9. Medical Evidence and Supporting Evidence

The school fully supports pupil's welfare and medical conditions and if your child has a chronic, persistent or recurrent health issue, we can arrange for a meeting with parents to discuss what additional support can be offered to help your child access school.

If your child's attendance falls to a level that is likely to adversely affect their long term educational success we will arrange to discuss this with you personally and may ask you to supply medical evidence for any future absences. This will enable us to provide suitable care in school and support our coding process.

Pupils with medical conditions should attend school as per normal and we shall try to meet their needs (depending on need / resources), however we cannot simply accept parental information without the correct medical evidence.

We ask that parents making medical appointments for their child, book them early or late in the day, so pupils can be in school for at least half the day.

10. Roles and Responsibilities in Managing Attendance and Punctuality

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school when ever the child/children is unable to attend school
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and keep in regular contact with school
- contact the school promptly whenever a problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that our school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, twice daily
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence
- contact those families whose child's attendance has dropped below 95% on a termly basis
- encourage good attendance
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, provide a safe learning environment; provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
- Ongoing irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher to notify parents/carers by letter and/or invite to meet in school to discuss concerns. This may involve notifying other agencies.
- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill

- by publishing and displaying attendance statistics
- by celebrating good and improved attendance 100% is rewarded on a termly basis and is cumulative over the course of the year.

11. School Interventions for Managing Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance falls below 90%. All pupils whose attendance have fallen to this level or are at risk of reaching this level will be closely monitored through the School's tracking procedure, and regular contact made with their parents/carers. Parents/carers will be given opportunities to work with school in improving their child's attendance.

The Attendance Officer and Senior Leadership Team will regularly analyse pupils absence and punctuality to look for patterns of absence and take swift action where there is an attendance concern. Parents of pupils who provide medical reasons will be asked to provide medical evidence. We shall write to parents with our letter 1 and letter 2, which details the procedures for this issue. If a parent of a pupil does not provide medical evidence then we may "*Unauthorise*" the absence.

Pupils whose percentage of attendance falls below 95% will be reviewed by Senior Leadership and the Attendance Officer and parents will be advised by letter. Failure to make an acceptable improvement or where there is an immediate concern further intervention's will be considered.

12. Pupil Support for Long Term Absenteeism

There are of course, good reasons (especially illness), which make attendance at school sometimes difficult. Nevertheless, lessons missed cannot be repeated and "catching up" is never as good as the original learning experience.

The School recognises the need to support pupils during and after long term absence of any kind and will:

- i. Endeavour to provide work for pupils to be completed off-site where appropriate and medical evidence has been received.
- ii. Consider all strategies in partnership with agencies to encourage the return of pupils to school. This may include negotiated timetables and/or gradual re-integration.
- iii. Ensure that there is a positive atmosphere within school in which pupils are welcomed back.

Encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in re-entry programmes.

13. Attendance Rewards

Brookvale actively promotes and rewards pupils who achieve good attendance and punctuality.

Each half term we hold a rewards assembly and reward pupils with excellent and good attendance above 97%.

Throughout the year we regularly review attendance and punctuality and use various strategies and interventions.

14. Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued in accordance Birmingham City Councils Code of Conduct. Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

15. Deletion from Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- i. The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- ii. The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- iii. The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- iv. Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- v. Death of a pupil
- vi. Transfer between schools
- vii. Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- viii. Failure to return from an leave of absence after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- ix. A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- x. In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- xi. 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the school and local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- xii. Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

Brookvale School will follow Birmingham City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

It is important that if families decide to send their child/children to a different school that they inform our school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving our school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. Failing to notify Brookvale will result in a referral to Birmingham City Council's Children Missing Education Service.

16. School Attendance Focused Target

Brookvale's attendance target is 97% however do not set a PA target.

In September 2015 the DfE increased the PA levels from 85% to 90%. The methodology used to calculate PA pupils has also been altered. In previous years a pupil would not be identified as a PA until they had amassed a set number of absences (e.g. 57 sessions in 2014/15). In September 2015 the threshold has been removed and a pupil is identified as PA once they miss 10% of their own individual sessions, this will mean all pupils below 90% will be PA.

The Ofsted Framework now requires pupils within the bottom 10% attendance to be monitored and for schools to be aware of the reasons for their absence.

17. Monitoring and Review

Achievement against Brookvales attendance targets will be reported upon to the Governing Body. The Headteacher together with the Deputy Headteacher will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and procedures and where necessary make recommendations to the Governing Body for improvement.

The school will keep accurate records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The absence rates will be reported on the Schools website.

18. Relationship to other Policies

The Attendance policy should be read in conjunction with:

- i. Guidance on admissions
- ii. Equality Statement
- iii. Guidance for staff on the registration of pupils
- iv. Keeping Children Safe in Education (otherwise known as safeguarding)
- v. The Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1. Equivalent Attendance Rates

95%	9 days or 2 weeks	50 lessons missed
90%	19 days or 4 weeks.	100 lessons missed
85%	29 days or 6 weeks	150 lessons missed
80%	38 days or 8 weeks.	200 lessons missed
75%	48 days or 10 weeks	250 lessons missed
70%	57 days or 11.5 weeks	290 lessons missed
65%	67 days or 13.5 weeks.	340 lessons missed