

Broughton Fields Primary School



Attendance Policy Statement

September 2020

Adopted 09/10/20

Next review date: October 2022

Changes related to the Coronavirus pandemic are shown in green

Introduction

At the heart of everything we do at Broughton Field Primary School is children's learning. Regular attendance at school is **crucial** in raising standards of education and ensuring that every child can meet their full potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. We have therefore adopted the following policy and procedures in consultation with parents, children, staff and governors.

Objectives

- To maintain attendance across the whole school at above 95%
- To reduce the percentage of unauthorised absence to 0.3% or below.
- To create a culture in which excellent attendance is accepted as the norm
- Demonstrate that excellent attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.

The Education Act 1996

The Education Act 1996 states that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16 year olds) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the LA to ensure that parents meet these responsibilities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, school attendance was suspended for some children as a result of a Government directive to close schools. In this situation, we would not record attendance for those children directed to stay at home. For those in school, we would follow Government guidelines, but would still be proactive in following up unexpected absence in line with our safeguarding responsibilities.

Pupil Registration

The school is required to maintain two registers:

- an admission register (known as the school roll). The admission register shall contain a list of all pupils at the school
- an attendance register.

The school ensures that an attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

Authorised or Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away due to very exceptional circumstances (such as a family funeral or wedding), or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised**.

Responsibilities of Parents

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly. If a child does not attend regularly, parents should work closely with the school to resolve the problem.

At Broughton Fields Primary School we encourage a good working relationship with parents by regularly publicising the arrangements for notifying absence and the school's policy towards authorised absence.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school must have their absence recorded as being authorised or unauthorised. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

Lateness

Morning registration takes place at the start of school day at 8.40am. The registers will close at 8.45am. Any pupil arriving after this time and before 9.15am will be marked as late. After 9.15am pupils will be marked with an unauthorised absence, unless an explanation is given that can be accepted as grounds for authorising the late arrival.

The afternoon registration will be at 12.50pm for Foundation Stage, 1.00 pm for Key Stage 1 and years 3 and 4, and at 1.10pm for years 5 and 6. Registers will close at 1.00pm for Foundation Stage, 1.10 pm for Key Stage 1 and years 3 and 4, and at 1.15pm for years 5 and 6. Children who arrive late without an authorised reason after the register has closed are marked absent for that session.

Where children are regularly late for school, the school will write to parents informing them of the schools concerns and offering support and help to rectify the situation.

First Day Absence

Parents are expected to contact the school before 9.30am on first day of absence. Class teachers are initially responsible for ensuring that the office is made aware when children are absent by way of a clearly and correctly completed attendance register. Where contact has not been made by parents, our staff will then telephone or text the family and await an explanation for absence.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s.

Frequent Medical Absences

Parents should notify school as soon as possible when a child is ill. Where there is frequent illness (absence exceeds 10 days in any 12 school week period or more than 15 days over the academic year) school could request parents provide medical evidence to support any further illness(es). If evidence is not provided absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is important that on return from an absence, all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Telephone calls reporting absence and absence notes

The school requires an explanation for every session of absence recorded by a child. Where a telephone call or note is not provided when a child returns to school, we will adopt the following procedures: -

- Absence lateness slip sent out with accompanying letter asking for parents to complete reasons for absence.
- If the school receives no response to this letter, we then send out a second request for reasons for absence.
- If the school still receives no response to explain the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised. A 'notification of leave of absence' form will be completed by school and sent home to the parent to ensure they are aware that the absence is unauthorised.

Attendance Monitoring

The school monitors the attendance of all pupils, formally reviewing attendance figures every 3 weeks. If attendance is 90% or below and there is no substantive reason e.g. medical or authorised absence the school writes to the parents making them aware of the low attendance and the importance of consistent and regular attendance at school.

Where no improvements are seen at the next review (3 weeks later), school will send a second letter. After 9 weeks, without significant improvement, a letter will be sent home with an appointment to see the Headteacher to discuss the child's attendance. This may be carried out earlier depending upon the known circumstances of the family.

Each week, the parents of children who are recorded as being late are also notified.

The school will endeavour to work with and support all children and families where ever possible.

Holidays in term time

As per Department of Education legislation, from September 2013, Headteachers can no longer authorise **any** holidays taken during term time. Any holidays taken will be recorded as 'unauthorised', unless there are exceptional circumstances i.e. a family wedding.

The school will notify parents when absence has been recorded as 'unauthorised', but it is the Parent's responsibility to be aware of the amount of days (sessions) their child has been absent.

School will expect parents/carers to complete and return a 'Notification of Absence' form to School where it is known in advance that a child will be absent, whether the absence is to be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Attendance Awards

The school operates a system of awards for good attendance.

Each term we present certificates to children reaching 100% attendance and also to the top class that has the best attendance across the school.

Each week the class with the best punctuality is awarded the 'Early Bird' during Golden assembly. **This has been suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic.**

At the end of the academic year, we present certificates to children reaching 100% attendance for the whole year and also to the top class that has the best annual attendance across the school.

Attendance Targets:

This year (20/21) our target is: 96.5%

**N Hearn
September 2020**

**Date of next review
October 2022**

Appendix 1

This list shows types of absences which schools may treat as authorised

Illness, medical and dental appointments

Parents should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Sight of an appointment card is advisable if a pupil is an irregular attender.

If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or returns home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session.

Schools should keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency.

A pupil receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'.

Days of religious observance

Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.

Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.

Dual Registration

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at both a PRU or special school and another local school. This helps, for example, to ease a phased return to mainstream education.

Where a pupil is dually registered at institution X and Y, institution X marks the pupil authorised absent while they are attending institution Y and vice-versa. Both institutions share responsibility for the child.

Failure to attend either institution at the proper time without good reason is unauthorised absence.

Exclusion

A pupil excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised, as it results from a decision taken by the school. Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded pupil is treated as authorised while any review or appeal is in progress.

If a permanent exclusion is confirmed, the pupil's name should be removed from the school roll on the school day either: after the appeal committee's confirmation of permanent exclusion; or on expiry of the time allowed for appeals to be made; or, if before that, the pupil takes up a place elsewhere. Meanwhile absence should be recorded as authorised.

Teachers are responsible for setting work for an excluded pupil who remains on the school roll.

Traveller children

To help ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. This means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while the family are travelling.

While the Traveller is away, the base school holds the place open and records absence as authorised.

Family bereavements

Schools should respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and have discretion to authorise such absences.

Special occasions

Schools should consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence. For example, attending the wedding of a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or a shopping trip in school hours would not and would be recorded as unauthorised.

Pupil participation in public performances will be treated as an authorised absence with the agreement of the Headteacher.

Lateness

Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival which could provide grounds for prosecution.

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open. Thirty minutes from the beginning of registration would be reasonable, but schools can set shorter periods.

In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, schools may keep the register open for a longer period.