

Attendance Policy

Bramley Grange Primary School

Written by : Z Norris Attendance Lead	Date: January 2023
Approved by: Chair of Governors	Date: January 2023
Next review Due:	Date: January 2024

1. Introduction and Aim of the Policy

Bramley Grange Primary school is committed to promoting a culture of high expectation, achievement and excellence.

Good attendance is crucial if children are to take advantage of the opportunities available to them and complete a successful journey through their time at our schools and as they move on into higher education or the world of work.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive, on time, every day that the School is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a pupil's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

We are committed to working with Parents and Carers to maximise the achievement and attendance for all children. There is a clear link between good attendance and punctuality with educational achievement.

In our schools, in order for an attendance record to be deemed acceptable, it should be 97% or above:

98 - 100% - Outstanding Attendance

97 – 99.9 % - Good Attendance

95 – 96.9% - Requires Improvement

92 – 94.9% - Cause for Concern

90 – 91.9% - At risk of Persistent Absenteeism

Below 90% - Persistent Absentee

Children with an attendance of 90% or below are classed as persistent absentees. **Persistent absenteeism is when a child misses 10% or more of the possible sessions in an academic year.**

Evidence suggests that children with an attendance of below 97% have a significantly lower chance of achieving 5 A*-C grades in their GCSE results, regardless of their ability.

The legal framework

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age, who is registered at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Registration

The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – once for the morning session and once in the afternoon.

The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes. Guidance on applying Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations can be found in 'Advice on School Attendance' published by the DfE

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf

Expectations and Responsibilities

We expect that all children will:

- attend School regularly
- attend School punctually
- attend School appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for their child will:

- encourage regular and punctual School attendance
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at School punctually, prepared for the School day
- contact School before morning registration, on each day of the child's absence, by calling School and making the appropriate selection when prompted to do so and then stating the reason for absence. Alternatively, a letter can be sent explaining the reason and date(s) of absence, giving the child's full name. Any unexplained absence is treated as unauthorised absence
- contact School if a child will be arriving late and provide a reason for lateness. Alternatively, a letter can be sent explaining the reason the child is late, giving the child's full name
- contact the School promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from School.

We expect that all teachers will;

- promote the 97% threshold for children
- complete registers accurately
- amend the register for late comers
- inform the appropriate member of staff of any information provided by children regarding their current or future attendance
- report any absence concerns to or appropriate staff member.

Promoting Good Attendance

The School has attendance as a high priority and monitor all pupils' attendance. Weekly meetings are held between the Head and the attendance lead to discuss individual pupils and the strategies that can be used to support and promote attendance. The impact of this is measured and termly reports are then provided to the Governors.

At Bramley Grange Primary School, there is a range of rewards for children to promote good attendance. We have a weekly class certificates and an attendance trophy presented to the class with the best attendance.

Definitions

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Every half-day absence from the school counts as one session and this has to be classified by the School (not the parent/carer) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised Leave of Absence is an absence from the school for a valid reason such as:

- Genuine illness
- Medical/dental appointments which fall unavoidably in school time
- Other emergencies and exceptional circumstances as determined at the discretion of the Headteacher/Head of School

Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of any medical/dental appointments and, wherever possible, arrange these appointments outside of the school day.

Unauthorised Leave of Absence is an absence which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' request has been agreed. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which are not explained properly
- Children who arrive at school after 9.30am
- Children who have been permitted to stay up late the previous night
- Shopping
- Looking after other children
- Birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be addressed between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If the parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they fall below 90% attendance for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly.

PA children are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA children and their parents/carers are requested to attend an Attendance Support Plan meetings (ASP).

Persistent Absenteeism can also lead to legal proceedings and the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (fines).

Rotherham Early Help (formerly the Education Welfare Officer (EWO))

Parents are expected to contact the School at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the School may refer the child to the Local Authority Early Help team.

He / She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement, but if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance are available from the School or Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact Early Help themselves to ask for help and information. They are independent of the School and will give impartial advice. Their number is available from the School office or by contacting the Local Education Authority. If a child's attendance gives cause for concern and sickness is continually reported, support will be sought through the School Nursing team.

Children Missing Education

All schools, including academies and free schools, must monitor children's attendance through their daily register. We are in agreement with the Local Authority to inform them of children who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. We must also notify the authority if a pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in certain circumstances. Children who remain on school roll may not necessarily be missing education but we should monitor attendance and address it when it is poor. It is also important that children's irregular attendance is referred to the authority. Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their children, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their children.

Academies must also arrange full-time education for excluded children from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. This information can be found in the school exclusions guidance.

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Headteacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from roll until we have been notified by another School that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be

removed from roll. They are reported to the Local Authority Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Pupils moving school

1. Moving from Bramley Grange Primary School

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school/school that they inform a member of the office staff as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The pupil's records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority for follow up, following the Children Missing in Education procedure.

2. Moving to Bramley Grange Primary School

Once the school receives the new pupil details the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the previous school to ensure all pupil records are transferred and to arrange a transition conversation. If the new pupil has any identified Special Educational Needs the school's SENDCo will also be involved at this stage.

The schools' Attendance Lead will also request and analyse previous attendance records and check against the LA attendance pathways so that if any processes were underway these can be continued without delay.

Punctuality and Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and all children must arrive on time. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss key work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and by celebrating good class punctuality.

Daily Absence Procedures

How we manage absence:

Parents/carers must notify the school office as soon as possible on the first day of absence, and no later than 9.30am, and the reason for absence will be recorded. (The school always endeavours to collect two contact numbers for Arbor)

If no notification is received by 9.30am, the school office will contact parents/carers by phone and/or text to establish the reason for absence

If no reason has been established, this absence will be reported to SLT.

If a child is already receiving multi-agency support, this will also be reported to the safeguarding lead and/or allocated social worker. School staff may undertake a home visit

If a child's attendance continues to give cause for concern and sickness is continually reported, support may be sought from the School Nursing team

Holidays

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that from September 2013, no holidays will be authorised by the School in term time. Holidays in term-time will be recorded as unauthorised and will incur a fine, unless the below exceptional circumstances apply:

Exceptional Circumstances

- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark upon a tour of duty abroad.
- Other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher.

To request a holiday in term-time, parents/carers must meet with the Headteacher or designated Senior Leader to obtain a holiday request form and explain the reasons for taking the holiday.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the School, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and will attract a Fixed Penalty Notice. A separate penalty notice will be issued to each parent for each child who has an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised Absences

The Headteacher, within the context of the law, can authorise absence. The fact that a parent has offered a note or an explanation in relation to a particular absence does not oblige the Head of School to accept it if it is felt that the explanation is not a valid reason for absence. If there are doubts about the explanation that remain after further investigation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Where parentally condoned unjustified absence appears to be a problem the School will involve the Early Help/ Local Authority Attendance Officer.

Unauthorised absences, including truancy, are recorded on a child's registration certificate.

Fixed Penalty Notices

The Local Authority have revised their policy and this is effective from 2022/23 academic year.

The updated code of conduct provides clarity to schools and families as to when a penalty notice can be issued.

The main change to the code is the removal of the following criteria which headteacher were previously required to consider when assessing the merits of a leave of absence request during term time:

- previous periods of leave of absence
- leave of absences taken in the first term,
- exams and assessments,
- employers letter(s).

Under the new code, penalty notices could be issued if any of the following three conditions applies:

- a pupil has accumulated five or more consecutive days of unauthorised leave of absence (holiday in term time),
- if due to sporadic absences, then, other than in specific circumstances, the parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement. If there are further absences within the 15 day monitoring period then a Penalty Notice may be issued,
- an excluded pupil present in a public place without justification, during the hours of the school day where the pupil is on roll, during the first five days of each fixed period or permanent exclusion.

- The amount payable on issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice is £60, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Unauthorised Absence Procedures

The School will monitor attendance on a weekly basis.

When a child's attendance or punctuality begins to be a concern, parents will be informed and subsequently become involved as outlined below: **Concern Letter**

Attendance will be monitored every week

Stage 1: If a pupil has 3 days unauthorised absence, a letter will be sent (**Letter 1**) to parents/carers. These children will be monitored and the Attendance Leader will contact parents/carers directly with significant concerns. This will be monitored for 4 weeks and the pupil will continue to be monitored for one more week per day of additional absence.

Stage 2: If further unauthorised absence occurs (7 days or 4 broken weeks), a second letter will be sent (Letter 2) to parents/carers. A meeting will be arranged with the pupil and parent.

Stage 3: If further unauthorised absence occurs (15 days or 8 broken weeks), a third letter will be sent (Letter 3) to parents/carers. A further meeting will be arranged with the pupil and parent.

Stage 4: If further unauthorised absence occurs the School will make a referral to the Rotherham Early help team. This will involve an Attendance Support Plan (ASP) meeting

taking place with parents/carers to issue an EPN warning letter and agree an action plan. This is the beginning of a six-week evidential period

Stage 5: If further unauthorised absence occurs within 15 school days of the evidential period, an FPN will be issued

Stage 6: Attendance will continue to be monitored and, if further unauthorised absence occurs, the process will be re-instigated from Stage 3

A second Fixed Penalty Notice could lead to automatic prosecution by the Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Elective Home Education

Persistent absenteeism should not be confused with elective home education.

Elective home education is the term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way in which they choose, instead of sending them to school full time. This is different to education provided by a Local Authority otherwise than at a school/academy, for example, tuition for children who are too ill to attend school (EOTAS – Education Other Than At School). Throughout this policy “parents” should be taken to include all those with parental responsibilities, including guardians and foster carers, although in this case the Local Authority may be the corporate parents.

Home education is not the only alternative to school attendance. In any circumstances where a child cannot attend school the Local Authority should be offering alternative provision to reduce the likelihood that a child will not receive a suitable education. Notwithstanding that, there are many reasons why parents do choose to educate children at home, including those set out below:

- Ideological or philosophical views which favour home education, or wishing to provide education which has a different basis to that normally found in schools

- Religious or cultural beliefs, with the wish to ensure that the child's education is aligned with these
- Dissatisfaction with the school system, or the school(s) at which a place is available
- Bullying of the child at school
- Health reasons, particularly the mental health of the child
- As a short term intervention for a particular reason
- A child's unwillingness or inability to go to school, including school phobia
- Special educational needs, with a perceived lack of suitable provision in the school system to meet those needs
- Disputes with a school over the education, special needs or behaviour of the child, in some cases resulting in 'off-rolling' or exclusion
- Familial reasons which have nothing to do with schools or education (e.g. using older children educated at home as carers)
- As a stop-gap whilst awaiting a place at a school other than the one allocated

The school and Trust will work with families and the LA to resolve any disputes or dissatisfaction with the school system that may cause parents to feel that home education is their only choice, equally we will support any transition to home education respecting parental choice.

Attendance Concern Letter

date_of_printing) «addressee»
«address_block»

ABSENCES MATTER AND YOU CAN HELP

Dear Parent/Carer of (XXXX)

(XXXX) has missed more school than (his/her) classmates.

(xxxx) has been absent for (xxx) days so far this school year.

Children fall behind when they miss school - whether children are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

You can have a big effect on (xxxx) absence this half term and we really appreciate your help.

Yours sincerely

Xxxx has missed (more) school than (his) classmates

Letter 1

Dear Parent/Carer

XXXX has missed significantly more school than (his/her) classmates.

We are concerned about XXXX's level of attendance, which currently stands at% and that (he/she) now has (3 days) of unauthorised absence.

XXXX's attendance will be closely monitored for the next 4 weeks and if during this period further unauthorised absences occur we will arrange a meeting in school to discuss next steps.

Children fall behind when they miss school - whether children are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

You can have a big effect on (xxxx) absence. We really appreciate your help.

Yours sincerely

Letter 2

Dear Parent/Carer

XXXX has missed significantly more school than (his/her) classmates.

We are concerned about XXXX's level of attendance, which currently stands at% and that (he/she) now has (7 days/or 4 broken weeks) of unauthorised absence.

Given XXXX's continued poor attendance please could you attend a meeting at school on: (Date/Time)

This will enable us to gain a better understanding of XXXX's attendance and allow us to support you in improving this.

Children fall behind when they miss school - whether children are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

You can have a big effect on (xxxx) absence. We really appreciate your help.

Yours sincerely

Letter 3

Dear Parent/Carer

XXXX has missed significantly more school than (his/her) classmates.

We are concerned about XXXX's level of attendance, which currently stands at% and that (he/she) now has (15 days/or 8 broken weeks) of unauthorised absence.

Despite our meeting on (Insert date) XXXX's has not improved. We would like to meet with you at school to discuss this on: (Date/Time)

This will enable us to gain a better understanding of XXXX's attendance and allow us to support you in improving this. The next steps in managing XXXX's attendance are to refer you to Rotherham's Early Help team.

Children fall behind when they miss school - whether children are absent for authorised or unauthorised reasons.

You can have a big effect on (xxxx) absence. We really appreciate your help.

Yours sincerely

Letter 4

Dear Parent/Carer

XXXX has missed significantly more school than (his/her) classmates.

Despite our meeting on (Insert date) XXXX's has not improved.

As a result of this we will be referring you to the Rotherham Early help team. This will involve establishing an Attendance Support Plan and could result in you receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice (Fine) .

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Parent Contract Example

Pupil Details					
Pupil's Name:				Date:	
Time:		Year Group:		DoB:	
Attendance %:		Unauthorised Session:		Authorised Sessions:	

Summary of School Actions (Indicate with date(s) when action was taken) - or attach chronology			
Soft Letter		Attendance Phone Call	
Letter 1/2/3		Attendance Email	

People Present	
Name	Role/Relationship to child

--	--

Medical Needs Protocol:		
Has the pupil had more than 15 days of authorised absence for illness? (If yes, has a Health Plan been discussed with parent/carers)?	Yes	No

Agency/Partnership Intervention		
Is there any Social Care / Health Involvement?	Yes	No
Details:		
Has and EHA been completed previously for the pupil?	Yes	No
Details, including whether it was successful or not:		
Does the pupil have an EHCP?	Yes	No
Does the pupil have an IAEP/part-time timetable?	Yes	No

Planned Absence

Do you have any plans for holiday/leave during term time this academic year?	Yes	No
Details:		

Identifying issues at school or home that may affect attendance and need support					
Issue	Yes	No	Issue	Yes	No
1. Alleged Bullying			5. pupil / Staff relationships		
2. Medical			6. Academic		
3. Home related difficulties			7. Behaviour / Attitude		
4. Transport			8. Community / Other		

For every issue raised:

1. Provide details and any actions taken by the parent(s) or school to support this issue prior to this meeting.
2. Agree actions to be taken by the parent(s) or school to support this issue after this meeting.

Details of Issues and Agreed Actions	
1. Issue Raised Include details and any previous actions	2. Agreed Action Indicate Parent / School responsibility

Summary of Actions Agreed		
Parent(s) Actions		
Schools Actions	Date Completed	Evidence with Attendance Officer

EHA Offer		
Would the parent like to complete an EHA? (possible Family Worker, Young Person's Worker, etc.)	Yes	No
If declined, please give the reason(s):		

ATTENDANCE TARGET

Attendance should be a minimum of 96% over the 8-week monitoring period.

Should your child have 8 unauthorised sessions or more during the 8-week monitoring period, you could be at risk, without further warning, of a penalty notice or legal proceedings in court.

There are 2 sessions per school day, AM and PM registration.

8 SCHOOL WEEK MONITORING PERIOD

START
DATE:

END DATE:

PARENT(S) NOTIFIED
Date & Method (e.g.
Letter)

"During this monitoring period, medical evidence will be required in order to authorise absence due to illness."

Please read both of these statements to the parent(s), before signing the contract:

Legal Responsibility

"I must remind you that as a parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually."

Attendance Target Review

"If the Attendance Target is met, then this contract will be reviewed, If the Attendance Target is not met, then we may extend the monitoring period, or you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings in Court, this might be without further warning."

Staff Signature:		Date:		Print	
				Name:	

Parent/Carer Signature:		Date:		Print Name:	
Parent/Carer Signature:		Date:		Print Name:	