

# Attendance Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Absence from school affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.
- 1.2. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
- 1.3. Ensuring a pupil's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law.
- 1.4. At BEP Group, we set aspirational targets for school attendance of 95% in order to ensure that our pupils come to school every day and make the best possible progress.

## 2. Promoting regular attendance

- 2.1. The school aims to promote a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.
- 2.2. We will:
  - 2.2.1. Advise parents & carers of the schools' expectations during the initial meetings for new pupils and on progress days
  - 2.2.2. Give parents & carers details on attendance and punctuality in letters home and on our website
  - 2.2.3. Report to parents & carers termly their child's attendance in their progress reports
  - 2.2.4. Contact parents & carers every day to clarify the reason for a child's absence from school
  - 2.2.5. If we are unable to obtain the reason for a pupil being absent, we will attempt to make contact with the pupil's emergency contacts.
  - 2.2.6. At this stage, if we have been unable to make contact with the family or emergency contacts, a home visit will be carried out. As a last resort, if the school has not been able to ascertain where a pupil is after following the steps above, the pupil will be classed as a missing child and they will be reported to the police.
  - 2.2.7. Celebrate good attendance with phone calls home.
  - 2.2.8. Reward good or improving attendance through attendance certificates and other rewards.

### **3. Understanding types of absence**

- 3.1. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.
- 3.2. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given.
- 3.3. This includes:
  - 3.3.1. Parents & carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily
  - 3.3.2. Truancy before or during the school day
  - 3.3.3. Absences which have never properly been explained
  - 3.3.4. Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
  - 3.3.5. Activities such as shopping, looking after other pupils or birthdays
  - 3.3.6. Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been formally agreed.
- 3.4. Whilst any pupil may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, parents & carers and child.
- 3.5. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with the family to understand the cause of the problem.
- 3.6. When a child's attendance drops below 90%, this will usually be addressed through an initial phone call and follow-up letter to parents or carers (decision made on a case by case basis), highlighting the cause for concern.
- 3.7. If the child's attendance still does not improve, a further warning letter will be sent and the matter will be raised with the relevant Educational Welfare Department through the completion of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) form.

### **4. Punctuality**

- 4.1. Good time-keeping is a vital skill for life. Being on time helps a pupil to be calm, relaxed and happy in school.
- 4.2. Poor punctuality is unacceptable.
- 4.3. If a pupil misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late-arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- 4.4. The register is a statutory document and is taken twice a day. Each day counts as 2 sessions of attendance.
- 4.5. Morning registers (session 1) are marked at all sites at 9.45am. At 10.15am the morning registers will be closed.
- 4.6. Afternoon registers (session 4) are marked at 12.50pm. Afternoon registers are closed at 1.20pm.
- 4.7. We also take a register at the start of session 2 and 3 in the morning and session 4 and 5 in the afternoon. This additional registration ensures children are on site for the full day and not truanting after receiving their statutory registration mark.
- 4.8. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be formally noted as late.
- 4.9. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark to note that they are on site but this will not count as a 'present' mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.
- 4.10. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager, Centre Manager or member of the Senior Team.
- 4.11. Parents & carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.
- 4.12. We encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and celebrating good individual punctuality.

## **5. Illness and medical appointments**

- 5.1. Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- 5.2. The school should be notified of these appointments in advance.
- 5.3. If it is necessary for a pupil to be out of school for this reason, the pupil should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- 5.4. Long-term standing medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence with a senior leader.
- 5.5. If your child is absent the parent must follow the following procedures:
  - 5.5.1. Contact us by telephone, mobile, email or text as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.30am.
  - 5.5.2. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call

- 5.5.3. Send in a written note of explanation (letter, email or text) for all absences of more than one day on the pupil's return to school
- 5.5.4. For medical appointments during the school day – phone us or send us a note in advance of the appointment.
- 5.6. If your child is absent BEP Group will:
  - 5.6.1. Text and follow-up telephone call the parent or carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
  - 5.6.2. Send a letter/text to all parents or carers within one week's return of the pupil from absence of two or more days requesting a note of explanation
  - 5.6.3. Invite the parent or carer in to discuss the situation with a senior leader if absences persist
  - 5.6.4. Consider referring the matter to an Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

## **6. Holidays during term time**

- 6.1. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. It is strongly discouraged by the government, local authorities and BEP Group.
- 6.2. It is the parent's or carer's obligation to apply to the school (in writing or at a meeting arranged with the Principal) for a leave of absence.
- 6.3. It must be made by the parent or carer with whom the child normally resides. All applications for leave must be made in advance and are at the final discretion of the Executive Headteacher or Principal.
- 6.4. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time as well as the attendance and punctuality record of the child.
- 6.5. We strongly recommend that parents & carers gain consent for any holiday in term time before booking the holiday. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school or in excess of that agreed will be classed as unauthorised.

## **7. Arrangements for absence in other circumstances**

- 8. Sudden serious circumstances do rarely occur, when it is impossible for a family to bring their child to school. It is essential that the school is informed by the parent or carer of the circumstances immediately so that the appropriate code can be noted in the register.

## 9. Monitoring absence


- 9.1. All school staff are committed to working with parents & carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible
- 9.2. Attendance is reviewed on a weekly basis where pupils identified as persistent absentees are noted for further monitoring. As a school, we have a duty to inform parents & carers of their child's attendance and how this can impact on their attainment.
- 9.3. BEP Group also keeps the 'home' referring schools and/or local authorities (who are responsible for pupils' placements) informed of all their placed pupils' attendance.
- 9.4. We are obliged to inform placing authorities when a pupil is absent for 10 school days or more but actually keep them informed of all our pupils' attendance records if they present any cause for concern.
- 9.5. All pupils who have 100% attendance and punctuality over a term will receive rewards.
- 9.6. Pupils are equally rewarded for improvements in attendance and punctuality

## 10. The role of the Education Welfare Service

- 10.1. Parents & carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance and/or punctuality problems together.
- 10.2. If difficulties cannot be sorted out this way, the schools may refer to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the local authority.
- 10.3. With the school the EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the pupil's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court.
- 10.4. Full details of the options to enforce attendance at school are available from your local authority.

## 11. Policy review

- 11.1. This policy and all policies at BEP Group will be reviewed and updated by the leadership team & governing body as per our policy review cycle.

<b>Chief Executive:</b> <b>Kelly Sims</b>		<b>Last review:</b> <b>Next Review:</b>	<b>Sept 2018</b> <b>Sept 2019</b>
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