



# Beechwood Primary School

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## Attendance Policy

### **Commitment to Attendance**

The staff of Beechwood Primary School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, pupils, governors and the Local Authority, to building schools which provide the best education possible for young people.

Regular attendance is key to achieving this. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we will encourage parents to ensure that their/our children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Regular school attendance at Beechwood Primary School will set pupils up for positive attendance throughout their school life.

### **Expectations**

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or an appropriate member of staff any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

School staff will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parent's/carer's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual pupils' attendance and punctuality

- Contact parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received by 10am, to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- Regularly inform parents/carers of the percentage % attendance of all pupils (parent's evenings, end of year reports etc.)
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Office (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order
- Notify the EWO after 10 days unexplained absence and after 15 days sickness absence.

### **Pupils Leaving During the School Day**

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Parents/carers should arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out at reception on leaving the school and signed back in on their return.
- When a pupil is being collected from school, parents/carers are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person or contact Social Services.

### **Punctuality/Lateness**

It is crucial that children arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils and parents/carers the grounds are open at 8.40am and the school office is open from 8.30am to 3.30pm.

- Registration takes place at 8.45am and pupils who arrive after 8.45am will be recorded as late to school
- Registers close at 9.20am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (This could lead to prosecution by the local authority if the problem persists)
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will initially be followed up by school staff and if not resolved will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

## **Changing Schools**

It is important that if families decided to send their child to a different school that they inform the school in writing 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 is supplied

The pupil's school 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 Education Welfare and after four weeks the pupil will be registered on the S2S website as a pupil missing education.

## **Elective Home Education**

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their children receive a suitable full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law allows parents/carers to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school. This is known as Elective Home Education.

Should parents/carers wish to follow this route then this needs to be put in writing to the Head Teacher with a request that their child is removed from the school roll.

School will then inform the Education Welfare Service and arrangements will be made to inspect the education put in place at home.

## **Leave of Absence**

- The school holiday dates, INSET days and SATs dates are published with sufficient notice
- Only in "exceptional" circumstances will leave of absence in term time be authorised. This is as per Department of Education Guidance published and in place for September 2013
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare may be notified.

## **Penalty Notices for Holidays**

- The Head Teacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for five or more days' unauthorised holiday. Penalty Notices are issued per parent per pupil
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notices is £60 per child and per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to pay.

## **Penalty Notices**

In addition to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised leave, Penalty Notices may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by a Truancy Patrol or if a parent/carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

### **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

If concerns regarding attendance arise, the class teacher will be notified and in the first instance talk to the parent. Should no improvement be seen or the concerns remain, a letter will be issued to the parent/carer. Any parent/carer whose child is identified as a cause for concern may be invited to attend an attendance panel at school, held in conjunction with the EWO. Following this, if there is no improvement in school attendance, the school will refer the family to the EWO who will work in partnership with school and parents/carers in support of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

If unauthorised absence continues Education Welfare will call a Pre-Court meeting with the aim of resolving the problem. If these meetings are unsuccessful the measure of last resort is to take parents/carers to court for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

# **Attendance Policy**

Reviewed: April 2016

Next Review: April 2018