



**BEECHWOOD**  
Primary School

**ATTENDANCE  
POLICY DOCUMENT**

**APRIL 2021**

Approved by: **Engagement & Wellbeing Committee**

Date: 28.04.21

Last reviewed on: **April 2021**

Next review due by: **April 2023**

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## 1. Rationale:

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills and knowledge which will equip them for a successful life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents/carers, the local community, Education Welfare Consultants and the Local Authority can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

## 2. Aims:

This attendance policy has the following aims:

- to improve the quality of school life;
- to create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality';
- to demonstrate to pupils, parents/carers and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself;
- to be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions;
- to value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.

## 3. Objectives:

In achieving the above aims, the school intends to:

- involve the children fully in their school attendance;
- improve communication with parents about regular school attendance;
- ensure ALL school staff continue to take responsibility for children's attendance;
- recognise the important role of class teachers, teaching assistants and the Pastoral Lead in promoting and monitoring good attendance;
- ensure time and organisation within the school enables the aims and objectives to be fully met.

## 4. Attendance Data:

Attendance Data will be collected regularly in order to monitor school attendance and this will be reported to governors and other stakeholders. Any attendance data will be easily available and effectively used by the staff in conjunction with Education Consultants and the Local Authority.

## 5. Working with Parents/Carers:

Parent/carers will be regularly informed of policy, practice and outcomes.

Parents/carers will be advised of our work on attendance:

- when their child/children first start at our school;
- through the Home School Agreement that they sign when their child starts at the school;

- through dojo messages which inform them of the overall attendance figure and the classes who have the highest attendance;
- at parents' evenings and via termly reports;
- via the attendance thermometer at the front of school;
- on the school website.

## **6. Legislation:**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that, "*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*"

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that, "if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil of a school fails to attend regularly at the school his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment and opportunities.

For the purpose of Educational Law, the definition of 'parental responsibility' lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer(s).

## **7. Completing Registers:**

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are a legal document on which attendance has to be recorded twice daily. The register may be required in a court of law for example as evidence in prosecutions of non-attendance in school. The register must be marked using the class codes as advised by the Department of Education. One school day is marked as two sessions - a.m. and p.m.

## **8. Attendance Procedures:**

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where the school cannot approve absence).

Beechwood Primary School operates a first day absence contact system. It is expected that parents/carers will provide an explanation of the reason on the first day the absence occurs. This can be by letter, telephone, personally at the office, via a Class Dojo message or by appointment.

If contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parents/carers, then the school will contact the home initially by phone call and, if there is no reply, this is followed up with a text message. If there is no contact made by parents by 4.00pm, or the reason for absence is not accepted, the absence will be unauthorised and the register will be marked as unauthorised absence (O).

This contact will be recorded on SIMS.

If the school is unable to contact the parents/carers then a home visit may be made for safeguarding purposes. In light of new safeguarding recommendations, parents/carers must provide the school with at least 2, and preferably 3, telephone numbers for different adults that the school can contact in the absence of a child. This is checked

and, where necessary, updated annually when data collection sheets are sent home for each child.

The headteacher and school staff will regularly remind parents/carers of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

## **9. Punctuality**

School begins at 8.55am and pupils are expected to be in school for registration by this time. The classroom doors are opened at 8.40am for any child or parent/carer who wishes to arrive early. A bell signals door opening at 8.40am and a second bell fifteen minutes later, at 8.55am, signals the official start of the school day.

***\*During Covid-19 restrictions this may change and start times will be staggered.\****

- Pupil absence will also be coded as 'unauthorised' when they arrive at school after registration has closed at 9.20am. This is coded as a 'U' - later after registers have closed.
- Before 9.20am, it is recorded as late 'L'.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, parents will be contacted by the school through a personal discussion or a letter. Support will be offered where possible. Parents may be referred to the Educational Welfare Consultant.

## **10. Addressing Attendance Concerns:**

Initially, concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers initially via 'Attendance Letter 1' which is sent home informing parents/carers of the school's concerns. Following this letter, there will be two weeks monitoring of the child's attendance.

If there is no improvement at this point, 'Attendance Letter 2' may be sent and parents/carers will be invited in for a meeting. There will be opportunities for the parents/carers to attend this meeting in school to discuss reasons for absence with school staff and the Education Welfare Consultant. Support will be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Where a parent/carer is unable to secure the regular school attendance of their child/children, the school may request the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice fine or initiate a prosecution through the Magistrates Court.

## **11. Unauthorised Absence:**

The Local Authority will issue Penalty Notices to parents/carers where there has been a referral from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

If a pupil accumulates 10 or more unauthorised absences ('O' and/or 'U' sessions) during a termly period, the school may apply to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court.

*See Appendix 1.*

## **12. Medical Absences:**

Any medical absence in excess of 7 days (14 sessions) per academic year will need to be supported with medical evidence. This does not have to be a doctor's note but can take the form of either a dated GP/nurse appointment card, a compliment slip signed and dated by the GP/nurse, a prescription or proof of prescribed medication relating to the current illness. If no medical evidence is received, then the absence will be coded as unauthorised (U).

## **13. Family Holiday during Term Time:**

The headteacher **cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time for a family holiday.** Leave of absence for other reasons can be requested but will only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances.**

If unauthorised leave is taken, the school will inform the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice may be issued. In some circumstances, this could result in criminal prosecutions. See Appendix 1.

It should be noted that if any application is declined and the absence occurs, then the school may apply to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

## **14. Supporting your child's Attendance:**

The following points will help to support your child's good attendance in school:

- Let the school know immediately why your child is absent. Contact must be made with the school each and every day of absence either by phone, dojo message or in person.
- Home/School communication is extremely important in supporting your child achieve and feel settled in school.
- Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.
- If medical appointments cannot be avoided during the school day, a copy of the appointment card will be requested.

## **15. Rewarding Good Attendance:**

Each week, class attendance data is shared with pupils in whole school celebration assembly. The class with the highest attendance in both KS1 and KS2 receive the attendance bear to keep for the week.

Each week the attendance thermometer is changed to give a visual representation of the attendance of all classes across the school. This is the responsibility of the pupil attendance monitors.

If any class manages 100% attendance across the week, all pupils in the class receive a treat.

100% attendance is the target for all pupils and those that manage to achieve this can collect special badges and have treat afternoons. Mrs. Harper (the headteacher) sends personalised letters or certificates to the parents/carers of each child during the term who has managed to achieve 100% attendance.

As a recognition of the part parents play in good attendance, if a child achieves 100% attendance across the year, the parents are invited in to a special assembly.

***\*These rewards and assemblies may not take place during Covid-19 restrictions.\****

*If parents/carers are worried about their child/s attendance, a meeting can be arranged with the class teacher, attendance lead or headteacher. They should call the school office (01270 214490) to arrange a mutually convenient time. Staff will be happy to meet to discuss any issues or concerns parent/carers may have.*

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Engagement and Wellbeing Governor sub-committee, held on the Governing Board on 28.04.21

Date to be reviewed: **April 2023**

Signed:

Name of signatory :	Sara Harper	J. Cargill
Role of signatory:	Headteacher	Chair of Governors

#### Appendix 1

<u>Penalties for Unauthorised Absence</u>		
Timeline	One Child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrate's Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child/children's regular attendance.	