



Bellenden Primary School Attendance Policy

The purpose of this Policy and Legislation

To ensure that parents/carers are aware of the legislation relating to attendance and that processes/measures are in place which encourage and support students and attendance at school when they are fit and healthy. The policy is designed to promote regular attendance and punctuality and as such offer all pupils equal access to learning. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Child Protection/Safeguarding policy.

Legal requirements:

The law requires that students of compulsory school age attend school every day on which it is open.

The School Attendance Policy adheres to the Acts and Regulations below:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

This policy will also have regard to the following DFE statutory guidance documents:-

- 'Children Missing Education' September 2016
- 'School attendance parental responsibility measure – Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police.' January 2015 and guidance document
- School Attendance – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent school and local authorities' November 2016

Responsibilities

School

While parents have primary responsibility in ensuring their children attend school regularly, the school can help parents in their efforts to achieve the maximum attendance of their children. This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to

enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data
- Have appropriate registration processes in place

To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school, initially with a first day absence text message or absence telephone call.

- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the Education Welfare Officer and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- To report to the Government on attendance twice a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedures.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To promote good attendance.
- Will adhere to the statutory guidance Children Missing Education and notify the local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register in all cases except when a standard transition occurs or the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by the school

Parent/Carers

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day which is 8.30am for year 5 and year 6 and 8.50 for other year groups
- To inform school on every day of any absence if expected return date is unknown.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible, minimum of two weeks' notice.
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's Absence Request Form, giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and Education Welfare Officer to improve lateness and attendance.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance they should:

- Talk to their child, it may be something simple that needs the school's help in resolving.
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

Role of Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

The Education Welfare Service has a statutory duty to investigate where it appears a young person is not attending school regularly. The school is required to make a referral as a point of care where:

- A student who has unauthorised absence of 10% or more.
- Where a student is absent without authorisation and subject to a Student Protection Plan
- 10 consecutive days of absence with NO reason provided and no contact from the parent/carer and where leave of absence has been refused.
- A minimum of 12 sessions of unauthorised absence in the last 6 school weeks.

The EWO will support schools in dealing with persistent absence and may be present at school attendance meetings with parents/carers or hold these meetings independent of the school. If there is no improvement in attendance the EWO will instigate the legal process of parental fines, or court proceedings.

Governing Body

The Governing Body has a legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance of pupils at Bellenden Primary School. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Absences

- 1 Parents are asked to contact the school as soon as possible when their child is absent and to give a reason for this absence. This may be by phone, letter or in person. We operate a first day absence follow up call if no reason for absence has been given by 10 am, a member of the Admin staff will then contact parents by telephone. If we fail to speak to the parents on the phone a text message sent to obtain a reason for absence.
- 2 The reason is noted by the Admin Staff in the main office, and then entered onto the computer system. If no reason is given 'A reason for absent form' is sent home.
- 3 If a child is away for more than 3 days and no reason given, the school will inform the Education Welfare Officer. In some instances, the Learning Mentor and Inclusion Manager may visit the family's home to establish the safety of the child and reasons for the child being away from school.
- 4 The school will also complete and submit a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to the Early Help team. A CAF is a referral tool which is used to work out what extra support a child needs to reduce or eliminate areas of difficulties.
- 5 The Admin team and senior leaders monitor attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis using Scholar Pack electronic attendance programme.

- 6 Parents will receive a letter and an electronic print from our attendance programme informing them of either an unacceptable level of absence or unexplained absences. The computer gives dates and times.
- 7 Attendance and punctuality are monitored and discussed on a regular basis. Any ongoing concerns will be discussed with the parents and the matter may be referred to the Education Welfare and Attendance Service.
- 8 Our registers are checked frequently by the Education Welfare and Attendance Service. They will contact any families that are giving cause for concern.

Types of Absences

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child attend the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absences. For example the child is away from school due to illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Persistence Absence

Persistence absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Children Missing in Education (CME)

Definition of CME

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not on a school roll being educated otherwise e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision) and who had been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time.

Department for Education Definition of children at Risk of Missing Education

Children and young people with poor school attendance are often the most vulnerable and more likely to become children missing from education. The authority recognises that the duty to identify children not receiving education does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly. The authority's CME strategy does however, include the reinforcement of duties that already exist for schools and therefore supports the monitoring of children at risk of missing education in the future. The monitoring of children at risk of missing education is carried out in partnership with schools where attendance of individual pupils gives cause for concern with the aim of reducing the risk in the future.

Punctuality

The school believes it is important for students to learn from an early age that punctuality is both important and polite. Being late not only has an effect on a student's own learning, self-esteem and confidence but is also disruptive to the learning of their classmates.

- At **8.30am** children in years 5 and 6 assemble in the hall and leave for their classes
- The bell is rung each morning at **8.50a.m** for all classes excepting years 5 and 6. The register is taken in all classes by **9.00a.m**. The Head Teachers and other members of staff will be available to meet parents on the playground.
- Children arriving after **9.00a.m**. should enter the school by using the main office entrance
- On arrival the learning mentor will record your child's name, time arrive and take a reason for the child's lateness
- Registers are closed at **9.30a.m**. Any child arriving after that time will receive an unauthorised absence mark.
- Lateness letters are sent to the parents of children who are late on more than one occasion for any specific week. Parents are offered the opportunity of meeting with one of the Head teachers or Inclusion Manager to discuss punctuality if they wish. The Head Teachers may feel it necessary to refer the matter to Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Parents will then be required to attend a punctuality panel.

Appointments with Doctor/Dentist etc.

- Parents are asked, where possible, to arrange appointments outside school hours or in the holidays.
- If appointments are unavoidable, a treatment card or an appointment notification text should be brought to the school and shown to the office. Copies are made and kept in the office. If parents need to take their child out of school early for whatever reason they must sign the book at the office. Pupils should be collected from and returned to the school office by an adult.

Term time Holidays

Statutory guidance from the Department for Education states that “Head Teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances”. Parents/carers should help the school to observe this directive by not applying for holidays in term time.

Should you need to request leave of absence under exceptional circumstances, the process is:

- Obtain a request form from the school office
- Complete the form giving reasons for leave and return to the school office
- Authorisation of time off can only be granted by the Executive Head Teacher and Head of School
- Each special leave request is considered on an individual basis, using the criteria laid out below.
- Regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval for leave of absence. If parents do not apply in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
- If a pupil is kept away for longer than the agreed period, without additional notification/contact from a parent/carer, a referral will be made to the Local Authority
- The additional period of absence will be marked as unauthorised (unless there are unavoidable reasons).
- A special leave request for a period longer than two weeks is seen as exceptional and will need to be authorised by the Governing Body
- A response will be sent to parent/carer informing them whether absence is authorised or not. If it is not authorised and the parent /carer decide to take their student out of school, the local authority may service a Fixed Penalty Notice. This could result in a fine of £60.00; failing to pay this within the time scale would result in the fine rising to £120.00 and failing to pay this could result in parent(s)/carer (s) facing prosecution and if proved, each parent/carer may receive a criminal conviction and/or fine to a maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Criteria Used to Authorise or Deny Special Leave

- The amount of time requested
- The age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record e.g pupil's with an attendance figure of below 96%
- There have been 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) or more of unauthorised absence already taken in the academic year.
- The proximity of SATs and other assessments
- The length of the proposed leave
- The pupil's ability to catch up the work
- The pupil's educational needs
- The general welfare of the pupil
- The purpose of the leave

- The frequency of the activity
- When the request was made

Monitoring Attendance

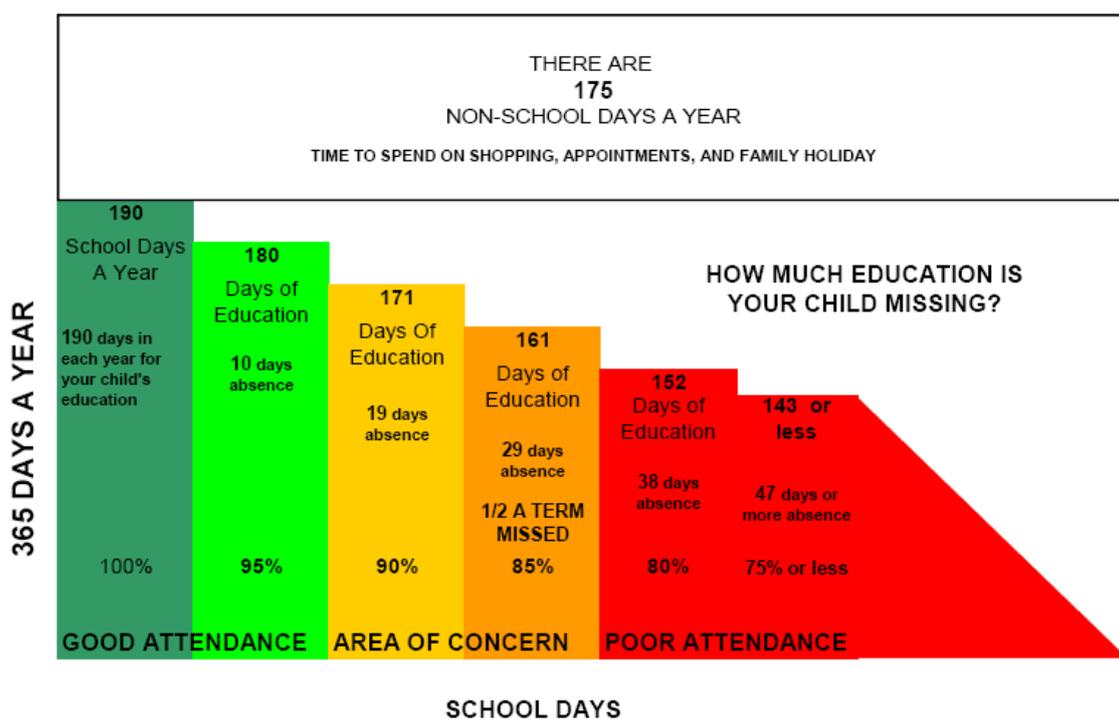
The School attendance target is 96%. Attendance figures will be monitored and reviewed weekly. Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality, or patterns of absence e.g. regular broken weeks of at least one day's absence, or regular absences on Mondays/Fridays, regular absence immediately prior to or following school holidays or unauthorised holidays in term time, various actions will take place. These consist of:

- Verbal contact made with parent/carer
- Written communication with parent/carer
- School meeting with parent to complete Attendance Contract
- Attendance Contract review meeting (if necessary with Education Welfare Officer)
- Attendance Panel meeting (lead by the school SMT, supported by EWO)

Attendance Reports/Analysis

We believe that excellent attendance and punctuality is needed in order for students to flourish and succeed. Not only is there a strong link between excellent attendance and academic achievement but studies have shown the links between excellent attendance and future careers prospects. The government has established a minimum target of 96% attendance to be achieved by all students.

Consequently, the attendance of all students are analysed regularly and shared with parents at the end of the school year with their child's school report. If there are concerns surrounding a student's attendance their parents will be notified earlier. The school also reports attendance figures to the Education Welfare Officer fortnightly and the Governing Body termly.



We record and promote good attendance in the following ways:

- School Trophy – Each week one class from each Key Stage with the highest attendance will receive the attendance trophy which is displayed in their class room for the week.
- Inform parents about attendance in monthly newsletters.
- Attendance Badges – Bronze badge for one term 100% attendance, Silver for two terms 100% attendance and Gold for 3 terms 100% attendance.
- Attendance and punctuality certificates are given out for 100% attendance and punctuality at the end of the academic year.
- Attendance and punctuality figures are recorded on the report to Parents and Carers at the end of the academic year, along with positive comments for effort where appropriate.

Approved by Governors: July 2017

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