

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Created:** April 2013

**Updated:** November 2021

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Brentside Primary Academy fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

### 2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

## 3.0 MAINTAINING AND PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:-

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

It is important that good attendance is encouraged and rewarded where possible.

### 3.1 Weekly Class Attendance Awards

Each week, in assembly, the class in KS1 and the class in KS2 with the best attendance for the week is presented with a certificate. A league table for each Key Stage is maintained. At the end of the term the top classes in each Key Stage will be given a prize. First prize for Autumn is a Pizza Party.

### 3.2 100% Attendance Awards

Pupils with 100% attendance for the year are awarded with a certificate and a badge which they get to wear at badge for the following year with 100% attendance on. The certificates and badges are awarded in assembly at the end of the year.

### 3.3 Attendance Noticeboard

There is a noticeboard dedicated to promoting good attendance in the lobby of the school. The results of the weekly class attendance prize is recorded and displayed on this noticeboard.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

### 4.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. This will still affect your child's attendance percentage.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### 4.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is absent without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- In most cases holidays during term time will be counted as unauthorised absences but parents are asked to provide information regarding this in written form to the Head teacher.

## 5.0 PROCEDURES

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures & expectations to all staff, governors, parents & pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Ealing Attendance Officer any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Ealing Attendance Officer and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the school office for further investigation.

## 6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

The named Senior Leader for Attendance is- Jemima Smith, Deputy Headteacher

### 6.1 Class Teacher Responsibilities

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Taking the register twice a day
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Leadership Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

### 6.2 Headteacher Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Liaising with other professionals to determine sources of difficulties & reasons for absence.

### 6.3 Administration staff Responsibilities

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring the absences and lateness is recorded.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.



**Headteacher:** Caroline Crosdale

- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children & their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Ealing Attendance Officer
- Keeping a record of all pupils referred to the Ealing Attendance Officer and the steps taken to improve attendance
- Reporting unauthorised attenders to the Ealing Attendance Officer for fines to be administered
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance to all pupils who have attendance under 90%
- Prepare reports monitoring attendance and reporting to the Headteacher

## 6.4 Parents Responsibilities

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we will sometimes ask for evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Providing proof of illness or medical appointments if requested due to concerns over persistent absence.

## 7.0 REGISTRATION

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.10am and by 1.10pm for KS2 and 1.40pm by KS1. (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present). Registration takes place using SIMs registers.

Teacher must fill in the register for any late pupils that arrive.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### 7.1 Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9.10am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school after 9.10am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.45am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (code U).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns & the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support & advice to address the issues.

Persistently late pupils will also be referred to the Ealing Attendance Officer.

### 7.2 Medical Appointments

Children who have attended a dentist, hospital or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.45am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

## 8.0 ABSENCES

### 8.1 Parents & Carers Reporting of Absence

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence by the following methods:-

- By phoning the school office and speaking to a member of the Admin Team 020 8813 2580 (option 2)
- By phoning the school and leaving a message on the answering machine 020 8813 2580 (option 1)
- By emailing the school- [admin@brentsideprimary.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:admin@brentsideprimary.ealing.sch.uk)
- By coming to the school office and reporting the absence in person
- By writing a letter or providing proof of a medical appointment if the absence is planned.

When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

### 8.2 Information on type of absence

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will phone the parent or carer requesting these details of the absence. If we do not receive a satisfactory explanation for the absence it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O) or unauthorised holiday (Attendance Code G)

## 8.3 Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:-

- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Going for a family day out/ Going shopping
- Interpreting or supporting a parent in a meeting
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Term time holiday
- Parent illness (other than an emergency)
- Where there is no explanation for an absence or the school considers the reason given for the absence as unsatisfactory
- Absence following or prior to a period of school closure unless satisfactory evidence is provided.

Unauthorised absences are reported to the Local Authority, this may result in you being contacted by the Ealing Council School Attendance Service.

**Unauthorised absences could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or other legal action.** Sanctions for continued, unauthorised absence in warnings, penalty notices (fines), prosecution in the magistrate’s court or an education supervision order through the family proceedings court.

### Fines

Penalty notices (fines) are to be issued by Ealing Council to each parent who fails to ensure their children’s regular attendance at school. Parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay will result in a prosecution in a magistrate’s court for irregular attendance, where, on conviction a fine of up to £1000 may be imposed as well as a record of criminal conviction.

## 8.4 First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child’s absence.

Absences will be reported to the school’s Child Protection Officer for pupils under social services supervision and any pupils that have had child protection concerns raised by the school.

## 8.5 Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will contact parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor’s note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.



## 9.0 PARENTAL REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR HOLIDAY

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2013 amendments were made to the 2006 Education Act relating to holidays during term time. The amendments make clear that Head Teachers **may not grant any leave of absence during term time**. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances (i.e. if there is an emergency) at the discretion of the Head Teacher. There is no entitlement to time off during term time.

If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening. Absence claimed as illness before or after the school holiday must be reported during the period of absence and medical evidence produced on return to school. Otherwise the absence will be regarded as unauthorised.

If you experience unexpected delays in returning from a trip abroad, for whatever reason, the school will require documentary evidence accompanied with proof or original return dates. i.e tickets or an original travel plan showing intent to return on time. Medical documentation should be in English. In certain circumstances if a child remains abroad at the beginning of the school term & the absence is extended, their school place maybe at risk.

### Fines

If a child is taken on holiday during term time the parent or carer is now very likely to receive a penalty notice from Ealing Council. Holidays during term time are **unauthorised absences**.

Penalty notices (fines) are to be issued by Ealing Council to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. Parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay will result in a prosecution in a magistrate's court for irregular attendance, where, on conviction a fine of up to £1000 may be imposed as well as a record of criminal conviction. All pupils with unauthorised absences are reported the Ealing Attendance Officer who initiates the fining process.

## 10.0 ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents and carers to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters from the school which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. The Deputy Head teacher will meet with parents of pupils with low attendance each term to discuss ways to improve this.

Each month a letter will be sent via ping for anyone pupil who has 90% or below. Please be aware that if your child is off school for any reason this will affect their overall attendance percentage.

### 10.1 Ealing Attendance Officer

Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Ealing Attendance Officer.

The Ealing Attendance Officer will write to and often make home visits to persistent non attenders. Penalty notices will be issued to parents where there has been unauthorised absence as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

The Ealing Attendance Officer visits once a term to check and monitor attendance. He works with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

## **10.2 Monitoring Attendance**

Our office staff, have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

## **11.0 PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

Once a child's attendance falls below 90% for whatever reason, he/she is automatically defined by the Department of Education (DfE) as a Persistent Absentee, irrespective of the reason for the absence. This is a severe problem for pupils. Much of the work they miss when they are off school is never made up; these gaps on their learning leave children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career.

Such low attendance is well below our expectations, and as such, the school will work in partnership with the parent to improve matters. This low attendance will also be reported to the Ealing Attendance Officer.

## **12.0 CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

BPA follows Ealing LA procedures "Children Who May Be Missing/Lost From Education". Where children on roll at BPA do not attend, and the Academy has made the usual enquiries to their whereabouts, they should then refer the case to the CME Team at Ealing via email or by submitting a Reasonable Enquiry Form, which documents the steps the school has taken to determine the whereabouts of a child, i.e. phone calls, letters, referrals to the Attendance Social Worker and dates of their visits.

If the allocated worker cannot locate the child/family, they will inform the Children Missing Education team and BPA will be advised by them if/when they can take the child off roll (normally after 4 weeks).

No child will be removed from the school roll until BPA have either had confirmation that they have started at a new school, or until the CME team and Attendance Social Worker have advised to do so.

## **13.0 SAFEGUARDING**

Attendance at school is known to be a key protective factor in safeguarding children and young people

Any significant changes in a child's attendance should be investigated as this could be a safeguarding issue.

For further safeguarding information please see our Safeguarding Policy

## **14.0 TRAVELLING GYPSY, ROMA AND TRAVELLER FAMILIES**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days)





in a year. Traveller absence (Code T) is acceptable only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around London, if a Traveller family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

BPA will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily whilst away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil's school place will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

BPA can operate effectively as the child's base school only if we are engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates

The HT and GB will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as for any other pupil.

## APPENDIX 1

### Deletions from the register

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

**8.—(1) The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age shall be deleted from the admission register—**

(a) where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local education authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local education authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school;

(b) except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school;

(c) where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion;

(d) in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school;

(e) except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered;

(f) in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7(3), that —

(i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

(iii) both the proprietor and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

(g) that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;

(h) that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and —



(i)at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);

(ii)the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

(iii)both the proprietor of the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

(i)that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period;

(j)that the pupil has died;

(k)that he will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and the relevant person has indicated that he will cease to attend the school;

(l)in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school;

(m)that he has been permanently excluded from the school; or

(n)where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.