

Attendance



Brambleside Primary School

Brambleside Academy Trust

Head Teacher Name & Signature:	Drew Brown	Date:
Chair of Governors Name & Signature	Bill Parker	Date:
Last reviewed on:	30.11.22	
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Lead	DB	
Situation	O - 2 Changes /No Changes / New	

Attendance Policy

Importance of good attendance

Brambleside Primary School aims to encourage and assist children to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality. All staff and governors view regular school attendance as essential for all children if they are to maximise opportunities for each child to realise their true potential. We aim to work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance.

We aim to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

We aim to emphasise the importance of, and secure, maximum attendance at school to enable pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by:

- making explicit to all relevant parties the school's expectations for attendance levels
- promoting a consistent approach across the school to all matters relating to attendance
- clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance
- communicating to all relevant parties (teachers, parents, children) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are authorised
- stressing the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance

Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it, the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; absence results in missed learning. It is a legal requirement that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school.

Irregular attendance results in children not fulfilling their true potential, being placed at risk and being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour. Therefore, we take the issue of attendance very seriously and do all we can to obtain very high attendance from all our pupils.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.

Absence from school will be authorised only at the discretion of the Headteacher based on their assessment of the situation and if it is for the following reasons: -

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance (ceremony only, not extended leave). This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.

- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement, and for the funeral service (not extended leave)
- Holidays granted under exceptional circumstances and agreed by the Headteacher
- Time allocated visits to seriously ill relatives which cannot be scheduled outside of school time
- One day allocation to children of service personnel returning from long operational tours
- 'Reasonable' time to recover from family trauma or crisis

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, where a repeat reason is provided without supporting medical evidence, or where no reason has been provided. This type of absence can lead to Education Inclusion Partnership using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/Carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time

Schools should make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.

Working Together – Home School Partnership

Improving attendance at Brambleside Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – children, parents, governors and all staff.

What we ask of pupils – all pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Children who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their class teacher, and if the need should arise, from the Senco or Headteacher.

What we ask of parents/carers – Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually and ready to learn. Good sleep patterns, healthy eating and exercise all support good attendance and learning.

If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, parents are requested to notify the school on the first day of absence before 8.50am. If this does not happen, the school office will contact parents. Therefore, it is important that all personal details are regularly updated by parents. A child's absence from school will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parent. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance. Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical / dental appointments for their child during school hours.

In return the school will – encourage good attendance and punctuality. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Attendance is the responsibility of all staff.

Registration Procedures

It is a legal requirement that registers are taken at the beginning of a school session. It is also very important in the case of a fire or the evacuation of the school that there is an accurate record of which pupils are in the building. Registers are taken promptly by the class teacher twice a day, at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Doors open at 8.40am and registers are taken at 8.50am. Any child arriving after 8.50am (doors closed) will need to enter via the school Office giving a reason for their lateness. The afternoon register is taken at 1.10pm.

Register Codes

The following codes are applied on the registers:

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by any appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreed)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Lateness Procedures

If a child misses the register, lateness should be recorded at the school office as soon as the child arrives. Registers will close 15 minutes after the start of the session. Children arriving within those 15 minutes will be marked 'late before the register closes' and will officially be recorded as late for the session. Children arriving after the register has closed have to be marked as 'late after the register has closed' and will be officially marked as an unauthorised absence for that session, unless a valid reason is received (in which case it would be authorised). If a child has a pattern of recorded late marks in any term a letter will be sent inviting parents to a meeting.

Absence monitoring may also identify trends and patterns of lateness which may cause concern (e.g. pattern of lateness on Mondays). Where this is identified the school will contact the parents.

Late Collection

If children are not collected when school finishes at 3.15pm they will be kept with the class teacher until the parent/carer arrives to collect. Whilst we appreciate that there are times when you maybe unavoidably late, it is not acceptable for this to be every day or on a regular basis. We are unable to provide care for your child after 3.15pm.

First day response procedure

The school will make every effort to contact parents/carers who do not call the school to check the child's welfare and clarify the reasons for absence. The school will take reasonable steps to check the accuracy of the register before contacting parents. The school will use discretion to ensure that vulnerable children or those with low attendance are prioritised when making contact. Where appropriate, home visits may take place and other agencies may be informed in order to safeguard the child.

Notifying Absence

Parents are expected to inform the school on the first day of absence by 8.50 a.m. when registers are completed. A telephone call will be made by the school for every consecutive day of absence until a reason has been ascertained. A telephone message, email or a verbal message from an adult is sufficient. In cases of written or verbal information the reason should be recorded. If no reason is given for an absence, a 'Reason for Unexplained Absence' letter may be sent asking for an explanation for the absence.

Unauthorised absence

Any absence that is not seen to be reasonable by the school will be deemed 'unauthorised' and recorded as such. This will apply to all absence without acceptable reason.

Early Departures

Children who leave early – partway through the school day – must be 'signed out' at the school office.

Religious Observance

Absence will be authorised when it is due to religious observance for up to one day per religious event. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the school should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

School Closure

In the event of an emergency school closure such as strike days, bad weather etc. children will be marked with the 'enforced school closure' code so that this does not affect their personal attendance.

Holidays during term time

Statutory guidance released by the DfE in August 2013 states that 'Headteacher's should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances'. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend together, including weekends and school holidays. Headteacher's will rightly prioritise attendance.

The decision to authorise absence for exceptional circumstances is at the Headteacher's discretion.

Parents who take unauthorised holiday absence

Parents who take unauthorised holiday may be referred to the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team.

Procedure for requesting absence for exceptional circumstances:

Parents/carers to complete 'Request for absence during term time' form which is submitted to the Headteacher at least two weeks prior to the holiday date. Parents/carers may also be requested to make an appointment with the Headteacher, at this time, to discuss their reasons for considering a holiday during term time.

The Headteacher will make a decision, current attendance and previous academic year's attendance levels will also be taken into account when making the decision. Parents/carers will be informed of the decision by the 'Request for absence during term time' form being returned and signed by the Headteacher.

'Missing from Education'

If a child is absent from school for 5 consecutive days without any contact being made between home and school, the child will be reported as 'Missing from Education' and we will make an immediate referral to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team. During the 5 days of absence, the school will make every attempt to contact the parents through all contact details which the school has on record and will ensure that a home visit has been made.

In Year Transfer

In order to prevent children becoming 'missing from education' parents are requested to inform the school directly of their proposed school move, and complete a mid-year transfer form for signature by the Headteacher.

Reward systems

Brambleside Primary School offers an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos will aim to demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.

Absence Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance data will be monitored and analysed regularly in order to identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy / practice. A below 95% attendance sheet will be analysed regularly to identify patterns of concern. Absence monitoring may also identify trends and patterns of absence which may cause concern (e.g. pattern of Friday absences). Where this is identified the school will contact parents. Parents will be given a report of their child's attendance for the school year with their child's report.

Parent Contract

A parenting contract is a formal written signed agreement between parents and the school and should contain:

- A statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract; and
- A statement by the school agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract.

Parenting contracts can be used in cases of irregular attendance at school. Parenting contracts are voluntary but any non-compliance will be recorded by the school or local authority as it may be used in any future proceedings.

Persistent Absence and Fixed Penalty Notices

Where there is an ongoing concern regarding a child's absence and the school have been unable to secure improvements in attendance, a referral will be made to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team. Referrals to EIP may lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice or even prosecution. The referral will be stored on a secure database for use by Learning, Skills and Education staff and that these can discuss the child's progress with other involved professionals, including those from other organisations, settings and health colleagues.

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on each parent for each child. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Parents must pay penalty notice fees of £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days per child per parent. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act promptly and more quickly on prosecutions

Systems

At Brambleside, our expectation is that a child's attendance level will be at least 95%. Individual attendance levels will be monitored and steps taken if a child's attendance is below 95%, there has been 12 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 6 weeks or there has been 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence.

Green Pupils with attendance from 96% to 100%
Amber Pupils with attendance from 90% to 95%
Red Pupils with attendance below 90%

Addressing Poor attendance:

It is essential that Brambleside School addresses attendance concerns throughout the academic year. We do this through a series of staged letters, details of these and the logistical process can be seen below:

Attendance Procedure
Individual attendance levels will be monitored and steps taken if a child's attendance falls below 95%, there has been 12 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 6 weeks or there has been 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence.
If a child's cumulative attendance falls below 95% then the Stage 1 letter will be sent to inform parents/carers.
If a child's cumulative attendance remains below 95% for a second month then the Stage 2 letter will be sent inviting parent/carers to attend a 'Parent Contract Meeting'. A Parent Contract Meeting (PCM) will take place to set targets for attendance and identify any support required. All meeting notes will be recorded.
If parents/carers fail to engage with the PCM process then the Stage 3 letter will be sent inviting the parents to implement an EHA (Early Help Assessment) with the Family Support Worker.
An Early Help Assessment (EHA) will be offered for all PCM cases. If it is declined, this will be recorded on the pupil's file and confirmed in writing to the parents. The child's views will be sought. From this point absences will not be authorised without medical evidence.
A review period of 5 weeks will be set. After 5 weeks, a review will take place and the outcome will be recorded. If targets are met, then there is no longer a need for the contract. If there has been some improvement, attendance will be monitored for a further 5 weeks. If there is no improvement, we will seek advice from the Education and Inclusion Partnership Team (EIPT).
If a child has 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence then a referral will be made to the Education and Inclusion Partnership Team and the parent/carer will be informed in writing.
If a child's attendance continues to be a concern then a referral to the Education and Inclusion Partnership Team could result in legal action being taken.

Triggers for a fixed penalty notice will be:

- Attendance is below 95%
- There has been a minimum of 12 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 6 week period; a school day is two sessions (morning and afternoon)
- There has been 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence
- Irregular attendance

Definition of Parent

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

-All natural parents whether married or not.

-Any persons who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person.

-Any persons who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that a person with who the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law).

Appendix 1 - Attendance Letter – Stage 1

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Postcode

Date

Dear Parent Name

Below 95% Attendance

Re : Child's Name – Attendance Concern

Following a review of attendance since Month 2022, I note that NAME's attendance at school has fallen below 95% and an attendance of number 0.0% was recorded. I am required to write to the parents of any child whose absence falls below the 95% level, but acknowledge that your child may have legitimate reasons for absence and some absences may have been authorised.

I ask that you therefore give due consideration to NAME's attendance at school and request that every step be taken to improve upon this level. I have enclosed the relevant Summary Report for the period Date to Date inclusive.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 2 - Attendance Letter – Stage 2

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Postcode

Date

Dear Parent Name

Attendance Concern Re:

DOB:

I am writing to you concerning the irregular attendance of NAME at School which as you are aware is causing concern. I would therefore like you to attend a Parenting Contract meeting on ___ at _____. The aim of this meeting, which will be chaired by myself, is to explore the reasons behind _____'s irregular school attendance and to draw up a Parenting Contract to help improve his/her attendance at school.

A leaflet outlining the Parenting Contract process is enclosed for your information, which should assist in your understanding of your child's attendance at school.

Whilst your involvement in any Parenting Contract is voluntary, you should be aware that, should NAME's attendance remain irregular, the Local Authority may take more formal action. This could result in a PACE Interview being held under caution in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. **You should also be aware that if convicted of an offence of failing to ensure regular attendance of your child at school under Section 444, 1 / 1A Education Act 1996, you could be fined up to £1000/ £2500 and/or receive a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.** I hope that you will work with us to improve your child's attendance and therefore avoid the need for legal proceedings to be implemented.

Should you have any special requirements please do not hesitate to contact me so that arrangements can be made prior to the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 3 - Attendance Letter – Stage 3

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Postcode

Date

Dear Name of Parent

Attendance Concern Re:

DOB:

I am writing to you concerning the irregular attendance of NAME at School which as you are aware is causing concern. As you have not engaged with the Parent Contract meeting, we are advising you that an Early Help Assessment can be implemented with the Family Support Worker. If the EHA is declined, this will be recorded on your child's file and confirmed to you in writing. From this point absences will not be authorised without medical evidence.

Whilst your involvement in any Parenting Contract is voluntary, you should be aware that, should NAME's attendance remain irregular, the Local Authority may take more formal action. This could result in a PACE Interview being held under caution in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. **You should also be aware that if convicted of an offence of failing to ensure regular attendance of your child at school under Section 444, 1 / 1A Education Act 1996, you could be fined up to £1,000/ £2,500 and/or receive a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.** I hope that you will work with us to improve your child's attendance and therefore avoid the need for legal proceedings to be implemented.

Should you have any special requirements please do not hesitate to contact me so that arrangements can be made prior to the meeting.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix 4 - Parent Contract Meetings Information

What is a Parenting Contract Meeting and what is it for?

It is a meeting of those involved with your child's school attendance. It will consider why attendance is so low and set targets to effect an improvement.

Why have I received this leaflet?

Because your child's school attendance has fallen below 95% over the last 10 weeks – **the same as missing one day in five. Over the course of a child's education, this would mean missing about 3 YEARS education.**

Who will be at the meeting?

You, your child, depending upon their age, and a senior member of staff from school. You may wish to bring a friend/family member for support. Other professionals involved with the family may also be invited.

What will happen?

You (and your child) will be encouraged to explain why the school attendance is so poor. Be honest – the meeting aims to find solutions and to avoid any further action by working together.

How will I know what has been agreed?

You will be asked to sign a written Parenting Contract, stating what action is to be taken, who is to do what and when. There should be actions for all and an attendance target of 95%. You will receive a copy of the agreement which will be reviewed within 5 school weeks.

How many meetings will I have to attend?

The Parenting Contract Meeting may be followed by a further 5 week review if attendance has improved considerably but not reached the agreed target. If attendance targets are not met and there is little improvement we will request the intervention of the Education Entitlement Team.

Remember

From the date of the first meeting all absences will be unauthorised unless a medical certificate or other supporting evidence is provided and agreed by the Head teacher.

Actions you are advised to take

Check with the school on a regular basis that your child is attending full time. Request that the school put your child on attendance report. If your child is failing to attend school, take your child to school each morning; hand your child over to a designated member of staff and get written evidence that you have done this.

Useful contact:

Information Advice and Support Services (IASS), email: contact@iassnorthants.co.uk , tel: 01604 364772, website <http://www.iassnorthants.co.uk/>