



Bennerley Fields School

Attendance Policy

Version	Date	Minute Number
1 - Date Approved	2012	
1	16.10.2017	23.6
Review Requirement : 3 Years		



Bennerley Fields School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction:

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Safeguarding: Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. We take this responsibility seriously.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that '*the parents of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and*
 - (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have*
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in a specific letter at the end of each term.
- Celebrate good attendance in assemblies each term.
- Reward good or improving attendance in line with meeting individual targets as appropriate.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Learning Trust using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- 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 which have not been agreed.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. Each of these pupils will have a plan, made together with parents, to get them back on track – that is, coming to school every day.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the school's educational welfare officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation with a member of staff;
- Refer the matter to the Welfare Office if attendance moves below 85%.

Education Welfare Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school office.

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a maximum of **10 days in any academic year may be authorised**. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually and use the local authority's Holiday Authorisation Calculation Chart. Copies of this are available from the school office.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

School target, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 93% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the county.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Ann Harrison - Head Teacher
Barbara Joss - Attendance Admin
Linda Willis - Governor for Attendance
All class teachers - for their own pupils.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Date of Policy/review:

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Bennerley Fields School.

Signed:

Child's name:

Class