

Braybrook Primary School



Attendance Policy

Status	Statutory
GB Monitor	Full Governing Body
Staff Lead	Valerie Day – Attendance Lead
Senior Lead	Headteacher
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Attendance Policy

Introduction

Braybrook Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the attendance policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

ALL staff at our school, have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The AIMS of our Attendance Policy:

Through the rigorous and consistent implementation of our whole school Attendance Policy, we aim to work collaboratively to:

- Maximise the attendance of all children, as they are missed when they are not at school.
- Promote good attendance and make both this and punctuality a priority focus.
- Monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties relating to this.
- Analyse attendance data regularly, to inform future policy and practice and heighten the awareness of families where attendance is less than good.
- Work closely with the wider community, including the Attendance Service, to adopt a supportive, multi-agency approach to good attendance.

Attendance Leader

A member of our staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that attendance is reported in the Headteacher's report at the meetings of the Full Governing Body. To support good attendance, the Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties relating to this.

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

Why Regular Attendance is so Important:

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.

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

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 and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Anti-bullying
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum

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

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

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Give you details of attendance in our monthly newsletters;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

Rewarding good attendance

In order to promote and incentivise good attendance, we adopt a range of approaches to recognise and celebrate success for individuals and groups of children. These include:

- ✓ Monthly attendance rewards for the best attending class each month.
- ✓ A half-termly draw to celebrate the 100% attendance of children across the school, to win a family treat or experience to enjoy together.
- ✓ An annual 100% reward, of a certificate, medal and voucher, for every child with 100% attendance.
- ✓ A letter from the Chair of Governors to the parents and children with 100% attendance at the end of the academic year.
- ✓ An annual 100% draw for one winner, to receive a bike and accessories.

The Law relating to attendance

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 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'

The Law relating to safeguarding:-

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and pupils under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence

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

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 authorised. This includes:

- a missed registration mark due to lateness
- 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 not authorised as an exceptional circumstance.

This type of absence can lead to Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is better never to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause 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 at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

All PA or potential PA cases are automatically referred to our link Peterborough City Council Attendance Officer on a monthly basis.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued by the LA

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met:

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to attendance at 95% or below and there are at least 8 sessions of unauthorised absence in any 8 week period (up to 3 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year).
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contributing to a level of attendance of 95% or below;
- Leave of absence in term time of at least 3 consecutive days (6 consecutive sessions) which has not been authorised by the school;
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification;
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct**, which is available on the Peterborough City Council website.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence (no later than 9.30am), stating the reason for this.

If your child is absent we will:

- Parentmail you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. If we are unable to contact you, absence will be recorded as 'No reason' (N).
- Write out to you to clarify the reason for the absence, on your child's return to school.

- If necessary, invite you in to discuss the situation with us;
- Refer the matter to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service if attendance falls below 90%. They may consider issuing a Penalty Notice for Non School Attendance.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure that we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents/Carers 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 School Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. S/he 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 recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the AO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Peterborough City Council Attendance Service, Bayard Place, Peterborough.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day then they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can therefore impact negatively absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Children are welcomed into classrooms from 8.45am daily.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of Absence:

Taking leave of absence without exceptional/unavoidable circumstances 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.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

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

All applications for leave of absence must be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that we will **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional / unavoidable circumstances.**

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

A Fixed Penalty Notice results in:

- A cost of £60 per parent / carer for each child. This will require payment being made to the Local Authority within 21 days.
- The cost increases to £120 per parent / carer for each child if payment is not received within 28 days.
- If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of a 28 day period, the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings and the outcome of a prosecution could be up to £1,000 per parent / carer.

Further advice and guidance on this matter can be located through the Department for Education website, entitled 'Advice on School Attendance'.

Deletions from Register

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

- (i) at no time was the 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(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any unavoidable cause;

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school

Miss Emma Green : Headteacher
Mrs Valerie Day : Attendance Lead / Office Manager
Mrs Margaret Durrant : Family Liaison Officer

The school also has a linked Local Authority Attendance Officer who is contactable through Peterborough City Council, School Improvement Team (Attendance Service) (01733) 863681

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good school attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers 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.