

BENTLEY ST PAUL'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE



Date of Policy: September 2017

Date of Review: June 2019

Introduction

Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it, the efforts of the best schools will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the education opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the education process and leads to education disadvantage. It places at risk the more vulnerable members of our community. Attendance is regularly monitored by the admin assistant who reports to the Headteacher.

Aims

- Improve pupil attendance to ensure continuity and progression.
- Ensure children access a broad and balance curriculum.
- Increase opportunity for extra curricular activities.

Implementation

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive effective full time education, (Section 36, 1944 Education Act). In most cases children attend school and therefore parents should ensure that their children attend and stay in school.

At our school the staff and governors endeavour to support parents in their responsibility through:

- providing an induction programme for new entrants and parents to help children come into school willingly and with a positive attitude.
- discussing attendance related issues with parents at Open Evenings.
- ensuring the school is bright, clean, warm and welcoming.
- Rewarding groups of pupils and individual pupils for good attendance
- ensuring teachers are available for informal contact and by appointment for more lengthy discussions.
- informing parents of any changes in the school routine by newsletter.
- bringing concerns about attendance to the notice of parents and together plan ways to address the issue. Key Stage Leader works with pupils and parents to encourage attendance and working to break down possible barriers. If concerns continue external agencies e.g. attendance officer and education welfare officer will be involved in order to support the school and the parents to improve attendance.

Reporting Absences

Parents are asked to inform school of the reasons for the child's absence as soon as possible e.g. answer phone.

Parents are expected to contact the school office on the first day of absence, giving as much information as is available at the time. If the absence is prolonged, interim information including medical evidence may be required so that the school can help with any necessary re-integration arrangements.

If parents do not contact we will seek to clarify the reason for the absence by telephone. For pupils on the child protection register and vulnerable pupils this will take place before 9.30am. The school may contact Social Care.

The school may contact parents to seek information regarding return to school. Unexplained absence or continued absence is reported to the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer for assistance. After 5 days absence without reasonable cause the child may be reported missing.

Registration

Under regulation 3 of the pupils Registration Regulation 1956 : all schools keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked as present or absent. The 1991 Regulations also state that registers must state whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The session times for school are:

Morning session	:	8.55am – 12.00pm
Afternoon session	:	1.00pm – 3.10 pm.(3.00pm KS1)

It is important the classes make a prompt and effective start.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the school, with the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents (Section 199, Education Act 1993).

The question of authorised and unauthorised absence is a fairly recent issue and to help parents to distinguish between the two the following guidelines are included. Class teachers and the headteacher are available to settle any queries parents may have.

Illness, medical and dental appointments

If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness, then the absence will be treated as authorised. In certain circumstances the pupil may be given work at home during the absence period or on return. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (i.e. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents. This can be in person, in writing, by telephone or an appointment card. A diary is maintained in the school office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or returning to site. Medical evidence may be required for persistent absences. (Over 15%, this equates to approximately 10 days in a term)

Guidance on infection control

To prevent the spread of infectious diseases and conditions the HPA (Health Protection Agency) recommend that there is a suggested period of time for children to remain off school following their exposure to the condition. We follow the guidance given by the HPA and a letter is enclosed within the Welcome Pack giving new parents the details. This letter is also displayed on the school website. Parents are also directed to the HPA website (www.hpa.org.uk) so that they can look at the recommendations for themselves. In these cases the child would be marked in the register as absent.

Lateness

The school policy is to encourage punctuality and to actively discourage lateness as it can seriously disrupt lessons. If a child is late and misses registration, they must report to the office and a late mark will be recorded. Obviously the school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. If, however, a pattern of lateness emerges, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the class teacher/headteacher in order to reach a satisfactory conclusion. If this is unsuccessful, arriving after registration will result in unauthorised absence which if cause for concern will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer. Children arriving in class after 9.00am will receive a late mark. Registers close at 9.25am; children arriving after this time will be marked as unauthorised.

Special Occasions

It is for schools to determine whether an absence in this category is authorised or not; much will depend on the circumstances of that particular case. Generally the rule should be that only truly exceptional occasions should be sanctioned through authorised absence after discussions with the Headteacher.

Family Bereavements

The death of a family member can be particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools have the discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.

Family Holidays

Under the New Education Regulations 2013 amended regulation 7, the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body, may not grant leave of absence for

the purpose of an annual family holiday during term time. Leave of absence may only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of absence should be made to the Headteacher on the appropriate form available from the school office or the school website with an additional covering letter outlining the exceptional circumstances.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#).

These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The school may request an issue of a Penalty notice by the Educational Welfare Services Legal Panel if the holiday is taken without authorisation. Amendments have been made to the Penalty notice regulations and are copied below.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the [Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#). These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Days of Religious Observance

Absence of a pupil for a participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong is classified as authorised absence. It is essential the school be given advance notice of religious observance days.

Dealing with concerns about pupil absence

The school will write to parents when attendance falls below 90% unless exceptional circumstances have been identified by the Headteacher. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored for a period of weeks. If there is no improvement a meeting will be called with the SENCo and the Headteacher to discuss the child's attendance. Further to this a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service to convene a school based meeting with parents. A further period of monitoring will take place to determine if legal proceedings are appropriate.

The school makes parents and families aware that

80% attendance is equal to one day off every week.

90% attendance is equal to one half day off every week.

Attendance at school is crucial to ensuring future economic well being, because of the importance of learning and ensuring pupils learn to be reliable to secure employment in the future.

Children will be rewarded for outstanding attendance. A child whose attendance is 98% or above is considered to have outstanding attendance. (98% attendance equates to approximately 4 days off in an academic year)