



**'BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE!'**

# **ATTENDANCE Policy**

**Lead person responsible:**  
**Ms D Roudette**

**Date:** February 2021

**Review Date:** February 2023

## **Introduction**

This 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 reach out for excellence. For our 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 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 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 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 creates 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
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti - bullying

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

## **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 Governors details on attendance Governing Board meetings;
- Give you details on attendance in our termly Year Group newsletters and annually on your child's attendance unless there is cause for concern;
- Report to you at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;

## **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 students under the age of 18.

## **Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by 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 London Borough of Brent 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
- term time leave which has not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off 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 and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, Parents should contact the school to discuss the matter.

## **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 parent's 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 and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils are identified and action taken through letters and conversations. This may then be followed up by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

### **Absence Procedures**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- It is good practice for parents/carers to send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence.
- 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 without authorisation we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our school Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Assistant Headteacher if absences are unauthorised;
- If unauthorised absence continues, we will invite you to a pre-referral meeting with the Brent Council's Education Welfare Officer.
- Refer the matter to Brent Council's Education Welfare officer if attendance is below 85% and the majority of absence is unauthorised. Unauthorised absence needs to be 10% or above for casework procedures to lead to a possible penalty notice or prosecution.
- The Education Welfare Service may take no action, issue a written warning, issue a penalty notice or prosecute you.

### **Telephone numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **The School Attendance 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 Brent Council's Education Welfare Service. 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, the Education Welfare Officer 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 on Brent Council's website on [www.brent.gov.uk](http://www.brent.gov.uk)

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arrivals also disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness**

The school day starts at **8:50am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9:00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

If your child has a persistent late record you can expect to receive a call and if this does not resolve the problem you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem. However you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Term time leave**

Taking your child out of school during term time will affect your child's learning and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time.

No holiday leave is granted to Year 6 students.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and all decisions are at the discretion of the Headteacher. In making a decision we will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS), or any other public examinations.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already giving cause for concern.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and we may refer you to Brent Council's Education Welfare Service and you may receive a Formal Warning, Education Penalty Notice or be prosecuted in court.

### **School targets**

The school presently meets the national standards and all children have a part to play in meeting these standards.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The average level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

### **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 this is the best way to ensure that a high level of attendance is achieved and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

In addition, we actively promote good attendance within school. We award the class with the least number of lates across a two-week period with "The Golden Peg Award" to acknowledge their effort to be in school on time.

Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis, the class with the highest attendance for the week is rewarded with an extra play session at lunchtime in our adventure garden.

Both these rewards are acknowledged and announced by the Head teacher within a whole school assembly, photos and their achievement are logged outside the Head teacher's office.

# CHILD ABSENCE PROCEDURE

