Attendance Policy

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Bentley new village primary school

headteacher: Kirsten Mckechnie

2019 2021

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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| **PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:**  **HEADTEACHER AND ATTENDANCE MANAGER A.SMITH** | **LAST UPDATED BY A.Smith** |
| **DATE: February 2019** |
| **SIGNED:** K.MCKECHNIE | **ROLE: HEADTEACHER** |
| **TO BE REVIEWED:** | **February 2021** |

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child’s regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

Bentley New Village Primary School aims to have ALL pupils attending regularly and punctually. Parents and Carers need to know and understand that, should their children fail to attend school, then the matter will be referred to the Attendance Manager and Education Welfare Service. All Doncaster schools are operating a prosecution system in cooperation with the Attendance and Welfare Service and that in conjunction with Doncaster Council schools are operating Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance.

**RATIONALE**

At Bentley New Village Primary School, we believe all pupils should value their education and demonstrate this passion through excellent attendance; pupils should rarely miss a day. To succeed and meet their potential, children should not be disadvantaged by low attendance or poor punctuality.

Every child has the right to an education and an excellent education begins with coming to school every day.

**PURPOSE**

To raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school.

* To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
* To inform parents of attendance and punctuality issues.
* To identify causes of non-attendance and take action.
* To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the School.

**PROCEDURES**

* Pupils are expected to attend at Bentley New Village Primary School for the full 190 days of the school academic year, unless there is a valid reason for that absence. There are two types of absence:
  1. Authorised absence – where school has approved a pupil’s absence.
  2. Unauthorised absence – where school will not approve a pupil’s absence.
* It is the school’s expectation that parents(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation if a pupil is absent on the first day of absence. This can be by means of:
  1. A letter / note
  2. Telephone call
  3. In person
* If contact explaining the pupil’s absence fails to be made on the first day of absence, the school will contact the home by telephone or text message on the first day of absence.

**Medical Appointments**

All appointments are expected to be outside of school hours. If an appointment does need to take place within school hours, school will need to be brought evidence of the appointment to authorise it. However, school has the right to not authorise these absences if attendance is a concern.

If a medical appointment is arranged for during school hours, school expect that your child is brought to school beforehand and returned after this appointment.

* The Attendance Manager, Headteacher, Governors and class teachers will remind parents, carers and pupils of the importance of high levels of attendance through such things as:
  1. School Council
  2. Weekly attendance assemblies
  3. Daily class charts
  4. Discussion during lessons
  5. Pupil attendance award schemes
  6. Attendance certificates
  7. Headteacher report to Governors
  8. School website
  9. School Prospectus
  10. Home/School agreements
  11. Newsletters

**ATTENDANCE CELEBRATION**

Pupils will receive awards for excellent attendance:

* Termly Certificates: Gold 100%; Silver 99%; Bronze 98%
* A Platinum Certificate for 100% attendance over 2 terms
* An Excellence in Attendance award for 100% for the entire year
* A 100% trophy for a full year’s attendance
* A half termly attendance celebration for attendance 97% or above
* A half termly prize is awarded to a pupil in Foundation, KS1 & KS2 for attendance 97% or above
* Weekly attendance assemblies to celebrate the class with the best attendance
* A chocolate cake to any class with 100% for the week

**IDENTIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE ISSUES AND REFERRAL PROCEDURES**

Attendance at school is a **legal requirement**. As a school, we are required to take action to ensure that your child is accessing their education.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) is when your child is regularly absent from school, causing their attendance to be a cause for concern.

Pupils presenting with issues of poor attendance/punctuality will be initially identified by class teachers or support staff who will follow the procedures outlined below. At all times, it is the duty of teachers and support staff to politely remind parents and carers of their responsibility to ensure full school attendance.

* On the first day of any absence, and on not receiving an explanation, staff must try to make contact with parents and carers. This should be done through the office staff via

phone call in the first instance. Any reason given should be noted on the SIMs electronic register. (**NB – we should have no ‘NO REASON KNOWN’.)**

* Where appropriate, it may be that a referral is made to the school nurse.
* Where appropriate, a free breakfast club place will be offered to families.

**HOME VISITS**

School may carry out a home visit if your child is absent and we are concerned about their attendance.

**ATTENDANCE OF 97% - ATTENDANCE LETTER 1**

If your child’s attendance falls to 97%, you will receive a Letter 1 to inform you that your child’s attendance is a concern and will be monitored closely for a two week period.

**ATTENDANCE OF 95% & ATTENDANCE LETTER 2**

If attendance continues to drop within the monitoring period or reaches 95% or below, you will receive a second letter requesting a meeting with school to discuss support to increase your child’s attendance. An Attendance Agreement will be discussed and signed by all attending the meeting. School will closely monitor your child’s attendance following this meeting. If the meeting is not attended, parents are welcome to rearrange a meeting with school or school will issue a Non Attendance Letter outlining an Attendance Support Agreement that has been made on the parent’s behalf. School will only authorise further absences, including sustained or repeated absences, if a valid reason for absence can be demonstrated.

**IF ATTENDANCE CONTINUES TO FALL**

If your child’s attendance fails to improve, and your child has unauthorised absences, following the meeting with school, school are required to make a referral to the Education Welfare Office who may issue a fine (an Education Penalty Notice) or pursue a prosecution.

*NB – it is essential that copies are kept in the AM’s file of all contact made with parents, including dates and copies of correspondence, as these are needed as evidence if there is a prosecution.*

**COMPLETING THE REGISTER**

* Registers are completed twice daily via the SIMs online registration. The Fire Register with absences only is kept in each classroom.
* Any messages from parents with regard to an absence can be input directly onto the SIMs system.
* Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons:
  1. They provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils
  2. They are legal documents that may be required in a court of law
* Symbols used to mark the register MUST be those referred to in the DfE guidance.

**PUNCTUALITY**

* School doors open at 8.45am and close at 8.55am when school begins. Your child will be considered late after 9am.
* Any lateness after the register closes will be recorded. Lateness will always be challenged at Reception.

To challenge lateness, school will:

* Speak to parent / carer at the point of drop – off
* Send a Punctuality letter home for persistent lateness
* Hold a meeting with parents & carers to discuss support & strategies
* Make a referral to the Education Welfare Office if no improvement occurs.

**PUPILS RETURNED TO SCHOOL BY TRUANCY PATOLS AND POLICE**

* The school will induct the pupil back into school following a discussion between the Headteacher, AM, the pupil and the parents.
* The pupil’s attendance and punctuality will then be monitored and attendance and pastoral plan put in place.

**FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

**Holidays in term time cannot *be authorised,*** unless it is considered to be an exceptional circumstance. The Attendance Manager and/or the Headteacher will meet with parents who feel they meet these exceptional circumstances and the EWO team may consulted for advice.

Generally, requests for term time holidays **will not be authorised** and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

FINES/FIXED PENALTY NOTICES MAY BE SOUGHT WHEN:

**A leave of absence over five days is taken, then the whole absence will be subject to a fixed penalty notice.**

**A child’s attendance is under 97%, then all the absence will be unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice will be issued;**

**There has been a claim that a child is ill but there is reason to believe a leave of absence has been taken, then the onus is upon the parent to present evidence to prove otherwise. If not, the absence will be unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice will be issued.**

**The absence is deemed to have considerable impact upon the learning, progress and well-being of the child.**

The Penalty is £60 per parent per pupil and, if not paid within 21 days, this will increase to £120. Failure to pay the full amount within 28 days will result in a summons to appear in the Magistrates Court on the grounds that you have failed to ensure your child’s regular attendance at school

* Please remember that in total there are 175 non-school days a year.
* Please remember that it is NOT the fault of the school that Travel Agencies increase their prices on holidays out of term time.

**HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?**

* Inform school about why your children are absent from school and for how long they are likely to be absent.
* Make medical appointments out of school hours.
* Only allow your children to take time off when absolutely necessary.
* Keep school informed of any changes to contact numbers so we can check immediately if your child is absent and we have not heard from you.
* If you have any concerns about punctuality, absence, or long term medical issues please inform the class teacher, Attendance Manager or Head teacher so we can offer the appropriate advice and support as soon as possible.

**ROLE OF THE GOVERNORS**

Each term, through the Headteacher’s Report, the Governing Body (or its representative sub-committee) will receive information regarding the level in attendance in school, for groups and as a whole school.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to challenge the Headteacher and the school’s senior leaders in relation to raising attendance, dealing with punctuality and how good attendance is promoted and rewarded.