



'BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE!'

ATTENDANCE Policy

Lead person responsible:

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Please note that the version of this document contained within the **Policy Folder on our school network** is the only version that is maintained.

Any printed copies or PDF versions should therefore be viewed as "uncontrolled" and as such, may not necessarily contain the latest updates and amendments.

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 we will achieve this together.

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 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 regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Therefore, 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 School Attendance Service Officer.

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 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's School Attendance Service Officer.
- Refer the matter to Brent School Attendance Service if attendance is below **90%** and most of the absence is unauthorised. Unauthorised absence needs to be **10%** or above for casework procedures to lead to a possible penalty notice or prosecution.
- The Brent School Attendance Service may take 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 always have your contact numbers. 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 School Attendance Service 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, the School Attendance Service

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

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 deciding 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 more than that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and we may refer you to Brent Council's School Attendance 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.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf

CHILD ABSENCE PROCEDURE

