

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that every child is punctual in their attendance at school and, where there is a need for a child to be absent from school, that the reason given is genuine and worthy of non-attendance.

We believe that regular and punctual attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from the opportunities which this school offers them.

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance, and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

We expect that all children will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

We expect that all parents or carers will:

- encourage regular attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, fully prepared for the day;
- ensure that they contact the School on the first day of absence, whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend;
- notify the School immediately of any changes to contact details;
- notify the School promptly of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

We expect that school staff will:

- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, provide a safe learning environment and provide a sympathetic response to any child's concerns;
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all children, at registration;
- monitor every child's attendance and punctuality;
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a child fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain reasons for the absence. Although parents may offer a reason, only the School can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verification from the family doctor or other relevant body may be requested;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of children who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the School's and the Local Authority's expectations with regard to regular attendance;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

Children leaving during the School Day

Children are not permitted to leave the premises without prior permission from the School.

Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time. Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected time of return.

Children must be collected by parents.

Parents must sign out their child/children on leaving the School and sign back in upon their return.

Registration and Punctuality

Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with the class teacher is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness to school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at school on time.

School opens at 8.35am and registration takes place at 8:45 am. Children who arrive after 8:45 am will be recorded as late to school.

If a child arrives at school after 8.45am the parent must sign in the late book to ensure their presence on site is noted, particularly in case of a fire drill.

Morning registration will close at 9:15 am. If a student arrives after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

Afternoon registration is taken at 1.15pm.

Lateness by a student will be dealt with through the School behavioural system and may be referred to Education Welfare.

The School day ends at 3:10pm each day for Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils and at 3.15pm for Key Stage 2 pupils.

Encouraging Attendance

We encourage regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the School or other children;
- by providing regular attendance statistics;
- by celebrating good and improved attendance; weekly presentation of the Attendance Bear for the class with the best attendance and termly presentation of certificates and an attendance prize;
- by monitoring children, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding to non-attendance

When a child does not attend School and a reason has not been previously provided, steps will be taken to ascertain why the child is absent. On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9:30am the School will endeavour to contact them using the first priority contact name that day by automated text, personal telephone or email messages. If we are unable to make contact, we will attempt to make contact through all the listed priority contacts for the child. If, by 10.30am, we are unable to make contact, we will refer to the Education Welfare Officer.

If there is no response, the School will continue to try to contact the parent/carer.

Holidays

The School holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the School holidays. If a family holiday in term time is unavoidable, parents/carers should **apply** to the School using the 'Application for Leave of Absence' application form. However it is no longer policy to authorise any absences due to holiday taken during term time. Some exceptional circumstances may be considered when appropriate.

No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right. Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.

If the absence exceeds 20 days, your child's name will be removed from the school roll and you will have to reapply for a place upon your return.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 (was 28 in previous policy) days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 (was 28 days in previous policy) days but within 28 (was 42 days in previous policy) days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 (was 42 days in previous policy) days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.
- Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
- Late arrival after close of registration.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued. If a warning is issued, a child will be given 15 school days to show improvement before the Penalty Notice is issued.

Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. Before a child is removed from the school roll, we need the following information, which we check and verify:

- the date the child will be leaving Brookwood Primary School and starting the new school;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known and is applicable.

Should this information not be available, the school may ask the Educational Welfare Officer to make appropriate checks.

The child's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible.

Approved at Curriculum and Pupil Wellbeing Committee: March 2018

Date for next review: March 2021 or on advice from the Education Welfare Officer