

Bleakhouse Primary School Attendance Policy

Bleakhouse Primary School aims to work together with parents in order to ensure the achievement of high levels of attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

This policy has been informed by 'Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, 2022) and by the regulations regarding school attendance. These are:

- The amendments to the Education (Pupil Regulation) (Amendment) Regulations (2013) regulations mean that from 1st September 2013 Head Teachers **may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Exceptional circumstances **do not include** family holidays, visiting relatives or friends, spectating at sporting or other events, looking after unwell family members, babysitting younger family members, birthdays or shopping etc.
- If a Parent/Carer chooses to take their child out of school during term time without leave of absence being granted then it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence on the school register.
- If a Parent/Carer considers that a request for leave of absence during term time is for 'exceptional circumstances' then a Leave of Absence Request Form should be completed and returned to the Head Teacher. The Leave of Absence Request Form and Guidance Notes are attached to this policy.
- Parents who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance can be receive a penalty notice (per parent, per child) up to £120 and/or be subject to further legal proceedings in the magistrates court. *Until 2023-2024 the LA is responsible for its Code of Conduct including when a fixed penalty notice is appropriate.*
- The school will make a referral to the Attendance & Prosecution Service for pupils who take unauthorised leave of ten half days or more. A referral may also be made for children who have ten half days unauthorised absence within the previous 25 school day period. Such a referral may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

Parents' Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis,
- Parents should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they should contact the school as soon as possible by phone, letter or in person,
- Parents may not authorise their child's absence- only the Headteacher can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents/carers. (Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.),
- Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration (8:50a.m.). If a child arrives after 9:00a.m. they need to report to the school office.

School's Responsibilities:

- *The school will promote the benefits of good attendance,*
- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress,

- Registers will be called twice daily (at 8:50a.m. and at 1:00p.m. for Key Stage 1 and 1:30p.m. for Key Stage 2). Nursery registers are taken at the start of each session. Registers will close at 9:30a.m. Any child arriving after the closing of the register will be recorded as 'late' for that session,
- Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the training (in the use of SIMS). Office staff will monitor the completed registers to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage,
- Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality the Deputy Head is to be informed as well as office staff,
- Should a child be absent the office staff will enter the appropriate code in the register. Should no explanation be received from the child's parent truancy call will be sent. If there is still no response a letter is sent to parents and any reply kept in the in the office and is transcribed onto First Day Calling.
- All absence notes from parents should be dated and stored neatly in the register folder until they are transcribed onto First Day Calling,
- The *Senior* Deputy Head will regularly collect *and analyse* attendance data and will use this data during meetings including Full Governor Meetings,
- *Letters detailing the amount of a child's loss of learning are sent to Parents when their child's absence is of concern,*
- *The school will work with families and, when appropriate, external agencies including the Local Authority to support overcoming barriers to attendance,*
- The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:
 - the Headteacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents on attendance matters;
 - appropriate personal encouragement or congratulation will be offered to individual children;
 - clear attendance information will be entered in the school brochure;
 - individual children will receive awards for annual 100% attendance;
 - The class with the highest attendance over each half term has a non-uniform day in the last week of the half term.

The School Day

The school day starts at 8:50a.m. and finishes at 3:15p.m. The children are supervised for five minutes before the start of the school day.

Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The named member for attendance amongst the Senior Leadership Team is Mrs. R.L. Soudani. She can be contacted on the school telephone number 0121 422 2841.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

The school uses a bespoke approach to supporting individuals to attend school who have persistent or severe absence. It is understood that, for a small number of children, there may be specific medical reasons for a child being absent for a more prolonged/regular absence. When needed, support to increase a child's attendance will initially be from the Family Support Worker who will try to identify any specific barriers to a child's attendance. Once barriers are identified specific plans and support are actioned. This may include signposting, an Early Help Assessment, involvement with agencies such as

Inclusion Support or Attendance and Prosecution. There may be other practical actions that can be taken on a personalised basis.

When support from the school has not resulted in a child increasing their attendance then the school may seek one or more of the following as appropriate:

- *A Parenting Contract*
- *An Education Supervised Order*
- *LA Prosecution which may result in a fine*
- *A Parenting Order*

Requesting a Leave of Absence Procedure

1. Parents complete a Leave of Absence Request Form available from the School Office and return it to the school a minimum of four weeks before the planned Leave of Absence.
2. School will advise the Parent in writing of the Headteacher's decision to authorise or unauthorise the request within five school days.
3. School may request a Penalty Notice be issued to Parents/Carers should any unauthorised Leave of Absence be taken in line with Guidance issued by the Local Authority.

This attendance policy will be reviewed every three years.

RS July 2022

Appendix 1 Model Letters

Dear

Your request for Leave of Absence (in exceptional circumstances) has been considered and declined. Should you decide to take out of school during term-time, then the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

The Leave of Absence Request – Guidance Notes sent to you with the Leave of Absence Request Form explain that under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 absence that **head teachers may not grant any Leave of Absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Exceptional circumstances do not include family holidays, visiting relatives or friends, attending sporting or other events, looking after family members who are unwell, babysitting younger family members, birthdays or shopping etc.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. J.E. Bates
Head teacher

Dear

Your request for Leave of Absence (in exceptional circumstances) has been considered and agreed.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. J.E. Bates
Head teacher