

BANDON HILL PRIMARY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Meadow Field - Wood Field - Oak Field

Updated	Summer 2018
Approved by governors	Summer 2018
Date to be reviewed	Summer 2020

Good attendance is essential for all children. At this school we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all children to reach their full potential. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and progress, as well as their friendship groups.

Punctuality is an important facet to attendance and is covered by this policy.

Reward systems are in place to recognise good attendance.

The minimum acceptable level of attendance for this school is 95% attendance. Throughout the school year we closely monitor absences and punctuality and will inform parents if there are any concerns with either their child's attendance or punctuality.

Definitions of Attendance and Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either Authorised or Unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required on the school's absence line or in writing.

Absences such as mornings or afternoons away from school for good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or any other unavoidable cause will be authorised at discretion of school

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'permission' is given. This type of absence can lead to the school and the Local Authority using sanctions i.e. penalty notices and/or legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court.

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 resolved by working together with the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is important that parents don't cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any child that

is seen to have reached the PA threshold, or is at risk of moving towards it is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately. All PA pupils are made known to the Borough School Attendance Officer who may then decide to meet with the parents along with the Strategic Lead.

Responsibilities

The Strategic Lead is responsible for:

- The Attendance Policy and reporting to governors.
- The organisation of rewards for good attendance.
- Liaison with the Borough Attendance Service.
- Supporting staff in monitoring and dealing with problems.
- Supporting families in resolving any problems working against good attendance.
- Publicising facts and figures with regard to the school's attendance record in reports to parents and governors.
- Responding to requests for term-time Leave of Absences.

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the registers are completed accurately at the beginning of each session.
- Ensuring that written and verbal messages on attendance reach the office.
- Liaising with the school administration assistants and the Strategic Lead over concerns about attendance.
- Ensuring that the delivery of the curriculum is challenging, interesting and stimulating so that children want to attend regularly.
- Ensuring that the ethos in the classroom is supportive of good attendance.

The family is responsible for:

- Making sure children attend regularly and punctually unless prevented by illness or medical appointment.
- Letting the school know on the same day by 9am why a child is absent.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

The school administration assistants are responsible for:

- Entering reasons for absences in the register and updating any additions brought to their attention by the class teacher.
- Drawing the Strategic Lead's attention to problems.

Procedures

- Contact the school by 9am on the first day of absence.
- The school office will phone the parents on the first day of absence, if notification has not been received by 10:30am.
- A letter is sent to the parents of any child that does not have a reason for absence.
- After a letter has been sent, if no reason has been given for the child's absence within seven days, it will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child has a persistent late record, parents will be asked to meet with the Strategic Lead and the Borough School Attendance Officer to resolve the problem. However, parents can approach the school for support and advice at any time, if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

- When applying for Leave of Absence for part of a day for a child to attend high school entrance exams, dance exams etc, the school will need to know when the child will be absent from class, and for how long. It is the expectation of the school that children will return to school after the test, or the next day. Any time off for revision for entrance exams will not be authorised.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Taking Leave of Absence in term time affects children's schooling as much as any other absence and the school expects parents to help us by not taking their children away in school time.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school for a Leave of Absence.

All applications for leave must be made in advance by filling in an absence request form. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Clearly no policy can cover all contingencies or the complexities of family life and individual circumstances.

Any Leave of Absence taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised. This could result in your child being removed from the school roll or parents being issued with a penalty notice.

Penalty Notices (Local Authority advice for parents and carers)

What is a Penalty Notice?

Under existing legislation, parents and carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot, or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court, but which seeks to secure improvement in a pupil's attendance. Full payment of the Penalty Notice discharges parents and carers of any further liability for the period stated on the Notice.

When Are They Issued

The London Borough of Sutton considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be issued in a range of situations, such as:

- Your child has unauthorised absences from school.
- Your child is persistently late at school after the registers have closed.
- Taking unauthorised Leave of Absence in term time.

Who Are They Issued To?

A Penalty Notice is issued to **each** parent in respect of **each** child not attending school. 'Parents' in Education law relates to a parent or carer of the child(ren).