

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Blower's Green Primary School

Introduction:

Our aim is for Blower's Green Primary School to be a successful school and your child can play 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 together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so 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, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (March 2013):

Protecting children from maltreatment.

Preventing impairment of children's health or development.

Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as 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 you details on attendance in our regular Newsletter;
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments.
- Termly activity sessions will take place for pupils with 100% attendance.
- Pupils who achieve 98% attendance and above will be eligible to participate in an end of year trip, funded by the school.

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 with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why 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 (please show school an appointment card or letter which confirms the appointment where possible), emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Religious Observance

One day of absence for major religious festivals (e.g. Eid) will be authorised, and this will not disqualify a child from receiving full attendance recognition.

Unauthorised absence

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 the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have not been properly explained on or before the first day of absence
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- missing, wet or dirty school uniform and/or footwear
- other family members being ill
- day trips and holidays in term time.

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, it is never better to 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 make things worse.

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 parents' 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. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence or call in to school and report to a member of staff;

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you,

We may also:

- Invite you to attend a meeting in school with the Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher to discuss concerns and to resolve any issues affecting attendance/punctuality,
- Refer the matter to the Education Investigation Service at Local Authority if unauthorised absence persists.

Keeping you informed:

- When your child's attendance percentage falls **below 95%** we will attempt to discuss this situation with you. NB: The national expectation for primary school attendance is 96%.
- When your child's attendance percentage falls **below 93%** we will write to let you know. At this level of absence we will request that medical evidence is provided in order for any future absences to be authorized.
- When your child's attendance percentage falls **below 90%** we will write to let you know. Your child is now within the Persistent Absence bracket. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. 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.

The Education Investigation Service:

Parents/carers 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 the Education Investigation Officer (EIO) from the Local Authority. 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, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EIO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01384 814317.

Lateness:

Being late 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 arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school gates open at **8.40 am** and children are encouraged to arrive by this time.

The school day starts at **8.50 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.00 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Keeping you informed:

- If your child has a persistent late record you may be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer/Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of absence in Term Time:

Each and every day that the school is open for registration, pupils are expected to attend school. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government have amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as of September 2013 to reflect this.

The Governors of this school have made the decision that leave of absence, including holidays, taken during term time **will not** be authorised, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Therefore, any period of absence taken will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrate's Court. In some cases the child may lose their school place if there is a period of unauthorised absence, including extended leave.

Keeping you informed:

- You are required to complete a Holiday/Leave Notification Form prior to taking the period of leave. The school deems the completion of this form to be essential in order to fulfil its statutory safeguarding duties. Failure to complete this may result in school referring the case to the Children Missing in Education Service.
- School will notify you in writing that holiday leave will not be authorised and that should you proceed in taking the period of leave you are at risk of Local Authority

intervention or the loss of school places.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Dudley.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Head Teacher

School Attendance Officer

Home/School Liaison Officer

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 the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils in order to ensure that attendance levels are as high as possible.

This policy was agreed by the Personnel Committee in

It will be reviewed as part of the school's cycle for reviewing policies.

Date of Policy/Review:

Updated –

Review due -

Signed

(The Headteacher)
