

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

November 2022

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility.

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

What is attendance?

School days are precious; children only attend school 190 out of 365 days. There are 175 days a year which parents can use for any activities other than school.

At Bramingham Primary, we aim to ensure that all children arrive at school and are on time every day. We believe that regular attendance at school is key to pupils gaining the greatest benefit from their education. It is also an important part of their preparation for the world of work. We will actively work with children and their families to promote and encourage 100% attendance and celebrate this wonderful achievement.

To manage and improve attendance effectively, we will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other professionals when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Promoting Attendance

We have developed a number of strategies which seek to raise levels of attendance and punctuality.

- If a child attends 100% of the week, they will automatically receive 10 epraise points. If attendance is 97%, they receive 5 epraise points. Though we expect a weekly attendance of 100%, we do recognise that there may be circumstances where this may not be possible for some of our children.
- During our weekly celebration assembly, we share the top classes with the best attendance. The class with the highest attendance receives the best attendance cup. This is shared on the website, on our newsletters and displayed in the school hall.

Parental Responsibility

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school. It is also their responsibility to ensure that their child arrives by 8:45am every day and returns home safely. It is their responsibility as a parent to inform the school if their child is going to be absent by 8:45am on the day of the absence. This will require the parent to either phone the school on 617500 or email on office@bramingham.net and report the reason of their child's absence and when they expect them to return.

If a child is absent due to vomiting and/or a diarrhoea virus, then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that they have been sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.

If a child has been absent for 10 sessions, we will request medical evidence to support the child's reason for being absent, particularly if there is a persistent or repeated health issue. This evidence can be one of the following: medical appointment card, letter from a health professional, doctor's note, medication provided by a doctor or copy of the prescription. If parents are unable to provide sufficient medical evidence, then absences will be recorded as unauthorised. A high number of unauthorised absences may result in legal action taken by the Education Welfare Service.

Medical Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If this is unavoidable for any reason, please ensure the child is either in school before the appointment or returns to school directly after the appointment. We will also require proof of the appointment in order for the absence to be authorised. Parents will be asked to provide appropriate proof prior to the appointment such as a letter, card or email/text message confirmation from the doctors/dentist/ or hospital or any other medical service. Failure to do so may result in the absence being unauthorised.

Safeguarding

If a child is absent and the parent has not contacted the school, then as part of our safeguarding procedures:

- The school office will send a text reminding parents to make contact. If parents do not respond to the text, we will then call the parents.
- If there is no response to the text or phone call, or there is a long period of absence then staff will carry out unannounced home visits. This will be to ascertain the whereabouts of the child for safety reasons.
- After a number of unsuccessful attempts of contact, we will then seek advice from external agencies i.e Social care, Police or Education Welfare Service.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. The Co-Headteachers may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Co-Headteachers, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). A written application must be made to request a leave of absence 4 weeks prior to leave, the Co-Headteachers will give due consideration to the circumstances and notify parents of the decision within two weeks. The application for leave of absence must include

a return date. Unauthorised holiday of 10 sessions (5 days) or more will result in the local authority issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. **In these circumstances a warning will not be given.** Penalty Notices are per parent, per child as appropriate, so if there are 2 parents both will need to pay the fine for each child (see below).

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Co-Headteachers to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. As the Co-Headteachers only grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. A note from a parent does not necessarily ensure that the absence will be authorised if the reasons given are not acceptable to the school. Parents need to consider carefully whether their child needs to be out of school at any time for any reason.

Low Attendance and the law

Low attendance and punctuality at school may trigger a Penalty Warning Notice whereby attendance will be closely monitored and absences carefully scrutinised by the Education Welfare Service. If attendance levels continue to be a cause for concern and there is insufficient medical evidence to support the child's absence, then this will be recorded as unauthorised. Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This introduces powers for Education Welfare Officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences, unauthorised lates and unauthorised term-time leave from school as an alternative to prosecution.

Penalty Notice fines are £60 per parent per pupil if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. There is no appeal process for a Penalty Notice. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice may result in prosecution. Penalty Notices are an alternative to prosecution for failing to ensure a child's regular attendance and will only be used once per pupil in an academic year before prosecution takes place

As part of our routine register check by the Education Welfare Officer, a Penalty Notice Warning Letter will be issued after a minimum of 8 sessions of unauthorised absence (or 4 days) within a 12 week period, including unauthorised late absence. Following this, if there are 6 further sessions of unauthorised absence within the 6-week monitoring period, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Monitoring Attendance and Lateness

Our expectation is that a child's attendance is 97% or above at the end of the school year. The school closely monitors attendance and lateness to try to minimise low attendance and punctuality through:

- promoting a caring and supportive school ethos
- monitoring attendance regularly and informing parent/carers when concerns arise. Our Family Workers will follow up unexplained absences or patterns of absences.
- deal with any difficulties experienced by children in a positive manner
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition

In school, attendance is monitored on a weekly basis by Mrs Rudland (attendance administrator) and Miss Legg (Senior Leader/ DSL). Weekly reports of pupil attendance that falls below 97% will be shared with the Co-Headteachers and appropriate action will be taken. This may include a phone call from a family worker, parents invited into school for a meeting or a home visit.

Every effort will be made to identify and reduce any barriers to the child attending school. In the event of concerns regarding a child's attendance (e.g. where concerns are raised that a child will not attain 97% attendance or a pattern of absence is identified) parents will be informed of this in writing and we will arrange to meet parents to identify ways we can support to improve this. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance, the school will discuss the matter with the Education Welfare Officer, for further action.

At the end of each term, parents will receive an attendance and absence figure for their child and information about the impact that any absence may be having on their child's learning.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
- Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, we work with families to help support routines. This includes collecting pupils in our minibus.

Some pupils may experience absence from school due to medical procedures. In order to support children and help them to feel happy at school, support can be given in relation to:

- Catching up with work missed
- Providing distance learning materials and access to remote learning online (Microsoft Teams)
- Support from the Family Workers/ teaching assistant
- 'Working from home packs' being dropped to parents/carers during longer periods of absence.

Persistent Absence

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), the school and local authority are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage pupils. In doing so, we will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand

the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties.

Severe Absence

Any child who is severely absent (missing 50% or more of school) may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of agencies. A concerted effort is therefore needed across all relevant services to prioritise them. All agencies should work together to make severe absence the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan to overcome the barriers to being in school.

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, we always work together with other local agencies to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

We will work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. We will decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

Where these are used, the aim will be to change parental behaviour and in making the decision to use an intervention, we have regard to our safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education. See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Punctuality

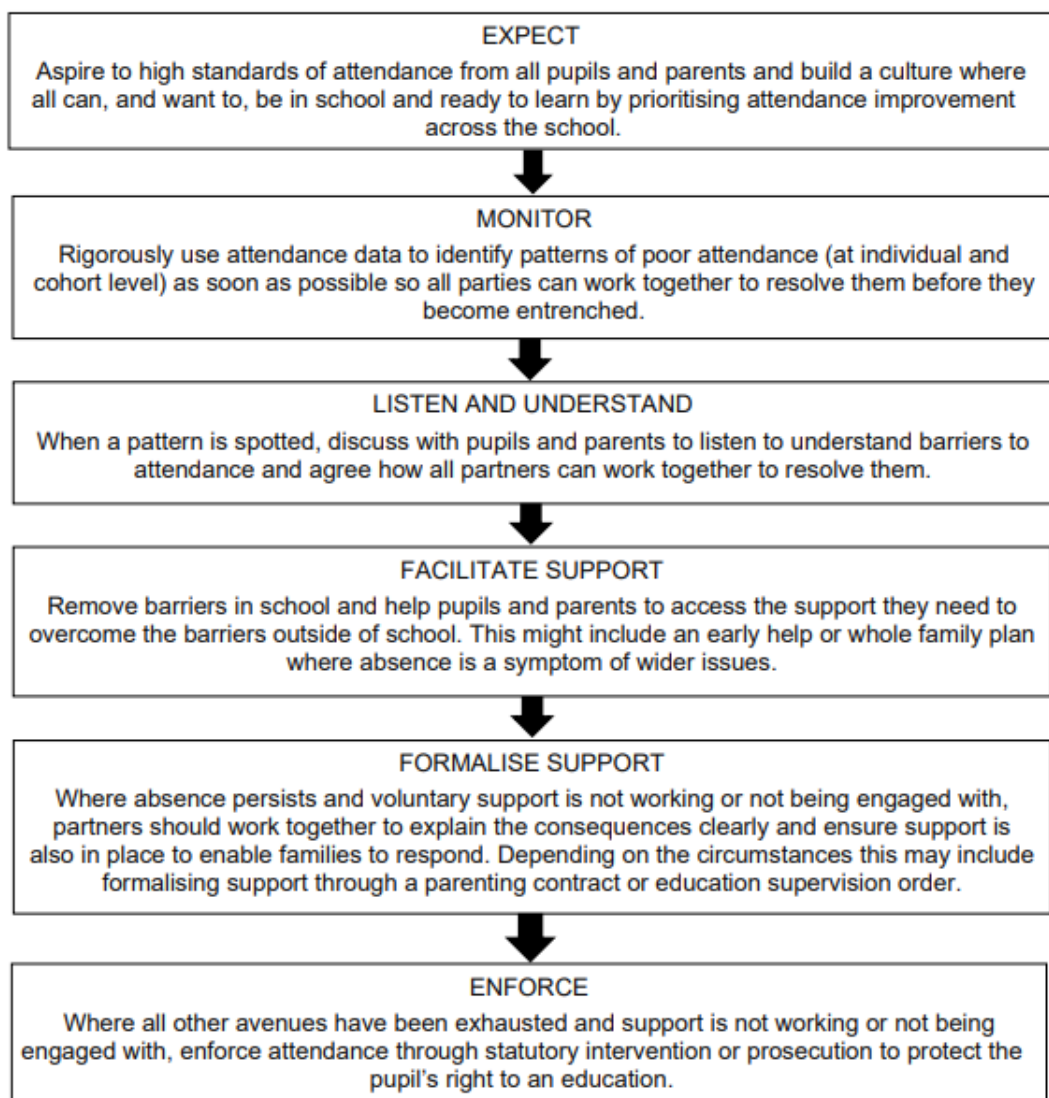
We take the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. Children are expected to arrive at 8:45am. Teachers take the register soon after classroom doors have been opened for the day and registration closes at 9:00am. Children arriving after this time should report to the main office and will be marked 'late'. When children are excessively late, they will be marked as an unauthorised late. Persistent excessive lateness may result in the Education Welfare Officer issuing a Penalty Warning Notice. Lateness will be monitored and parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the Family Workers or the EWO, if their child's lateness is causing concern.

Education Welfare Officers

The Education Welfare Officer works to support children in get the most from their education through regular and punctual school attendance. Education Welfare Officers (EWO) will work with families experiencing difficulties in ensuring their children attend school. The Education Welfare Service has enforcement powers which are used to prosecute parents who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly.

Working together to improve attendance

13. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



Managing Attendance Strategy

Parents inform school of absence by 8.45am by: email office@bramingham.net or call to the school on 617500



If no correspondence from parent by 9.00am, school will send text to parent.



If no response to text by 11.30am, school will ring first and second contact. A message will be left. Another call will be made in the afternoon.



DAY 2

If no response from first/ second contact, a phone call will be made to both contacts by 9.30am



If no response, Family worker to do a home visit by lunch time.



If parents cannot be contacted, school will contact the EWO to notify and seek advice.

Absence Monitoring

A weekly audit is carried out by LR. Any child below 97% - look at patterns, trend, context. Report generated shared with CL and Co-Headteachers



If attendance does not improve, a letter will be sent from LR, indicating the next steps if the attendance is still a concern.



If absence is below and a concern, parents will be phoned by FWs to discuss attendance. Support will be offered and impact of absence highlighted. Monitoring period will continue.



the Co-Heads, inviting parents to meet with them. In the meeting, parents will be informed that the EWO will be involved if attendance does not improve and this may result in a penalty notice.



Persistent absence is a concern. EWO sends penalty notice letter



Attendance has not improved. EWO is informed and a warning letter regarding a penalty is sent.

Persistent Lates

If child is regularly late, look for patterns/ trends.



LR to call parent to find out reasons, offer support from Family Workers



Lates persist. Family Workers meet with parents to discuss barriers and impact.
Letter from Co-Headteachers re lates and impact. Monitor



Lates persist. Co-Headteachers meet with parents