

Brockwell Junior School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Statistically, we know that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both Primary and Secondary school. Brockwell Nursery and Infant School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

Our school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels valued and secure. All school staff work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping.

To meet these objectives Brockwell Junior School has established an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistence absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The Government expects parents to:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- Ensure their child is punctual to their lessons.

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child aged 5-16, if registered at a school, attends regularly. If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school at which they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority's education welfare services. Education welfare services conduct all investigations in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

1. maintain or improve the overall percentage of pupils' regular school attendance.

This means:

- a) applying this Attendance Policy consistently.
- b) establishing and maintaining a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- c) relating attendance issues directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum.
- d) monitoring changes in attendance on a half termly basis.
- e) discouraging holiday absence by making parents clear about their legal rights regarding holiday absence.
- f) stressing to pupils and parents that high rates of attendance lead to sustained and therefore successful learning.
- g) improving the rates of children arriving on time for the start of the school day.
- h) reach our target of **96%** attendance or above.

2. make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.

This means:

- a) producing termly/annual reports to parents/governors.
- b) discussing attendance at induction meetings for new parents/pupils.
- c) making clear the times for the beginning of each session, school term dates and training days.
- d) making clear the procedure for parents with regard to lateness or absence.
- e) providing training for appointed staff with regard to attendance.
- f) displaying materials promoting good attendance on website.
- g) discussing attendance issues in relevant staff meetings (eg attendance review meetings).
- h) using award systems; certificates, to reward excellent levels of attendance.

3. develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.

This means:

- a) maintaining unambiguous procedures for statutory registration.
- b) making phone contact, using designated school staff, on first day of absence.
- c) ensuring clearly defined late registration procedures.
- d) responding swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
- e) defining clearly the roles and responsibilities with regard to attendance procedures, within the school staffing structure..
- f) reviewing attendance regularly.

4. provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.

This means:

- a) highlighting attendance in:
 - PSHE
 - Assemblies
 - Parents' meetings (including transition meetings)
- b) setting aside area/time for parents to speak to staff.
- c) seeking improved communication with parents eg when parents ring in.
- d) providing accurate and up-to-date contact information for parents.
- e) providing accurate references and information for parents at the end of half terms where a child's attendance has fallen below **90%**.
- f) considering later registration times on days of bad weather or where transport issues arise encouraging parents to get children into school as soon as possible.

5. developing a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.

This means:

- a) using consistent attendance codes following LA guidance.
- b) being consistent in the collection and provision of information.
- c) deciding what information, if any, is provided for:
 - governors
 - pastoral staff
 - other school staff
 - parents
 - pupils (individual or groups)
 - Early Help services

- d) Monitoring and identifying developing patterns of irregular attendance and lateness.

6. further developing positive and consistent communication between home and school and ensure the Safeguarding of children.

This means:

- a) initiating first day absence contact.
- b) promoting expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents.
- c) exploring the wide range of opportunities for parental partnerships (see Aim 2).
- d) providing information in a user-friendly way (may include languages other than English, and non-written).
- e) encouraging all parents into school.

7. implementing a system of rewards for good attending children.

This means:

- a) actively promoting attendance and associated reward
- b) ensuring fair and consistent implementation.
- c) involving pupils in the evaluation of good attendance.
- d) Promoting regular attendance in assembly
- e) taking action in accordance with objectives agreed between school and others, eg. Early Help, parents, Children's Services.

8. recognising the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

This means:

- a) being sensitive to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils.
- b) involving/informing all staff in any reintegration process.
- c) providing opportunities for counselling and feedback.
- d) considering peer support and mentoring.
- e) involving parents as far as possible.
- f) agreeing a timescale for the review of reintegration plan.
- g) including Early Help, parents and pupil in reintegration plans.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.

Responsibilities and Procedures

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have. It also includes the procedures the school will undertake to support good attendance:

The Role of the Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will:

- receive data from the office on a weekly basis showing whole class attendance. This is used to promote positive attendance in Celebration assembly.
- receive information regarding any individual's on a daily basis if required.
- receive class lists of attendance data at the start of every half term detailing individual attendance rates from the start of the school year. The Head Teacher then sends out copies of individual herringbones and a note of explanation to all those with attendance below **90%**.
- Implement School Graduated Attendance Response by Group (Appendix 1)

The Role of the Class Teacher

- The teacher is responsible for an accurate record of attendance being taken.
- (Support Staff/Teaching Assistants may be required to complete the register on behalf of the class teachers.)
- The register is taken at the start of each session, 8:55am and 1pm.
- Attendance is recorded using the attendance register. The appropriate symbols must be used (see appendix) as agreed.
- Registers are currently completed on Derbyshire's RM integris system using the Ipads.
- Persistent lateness is reported to the Head Teacher as should any degree or pattern of absence creating a concern to the class teacher.

The Role of Office/Admin Staff

- To monitor registers on a daily basis.
- Check absence notes and change any unauthorised absence codes if a message has been received in the office.
- If no message has been received by 9:30am, office staff ring child's contact numbers and find reason for absence.
- Absence letter to be sent home if the office is unable to make any contact.
- Prepare class attendance summaries on a weekly basis for Friday's assembly.
- During the first week back after every holiday, prepare class lists recording individual attendance rates enabling the Head Teacher's monitoring process.

The Role of the Parent/Guardian

- It is the statutory duty of every parent/guardian to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996)
- Parents must contact the school on the first day of absence notifying the school the reason why the child will not be attending.
- Where a message confirming absence has not been received, parents may be required to send into school a written note explaining the reason for each absence. (A blanket reason for a series of absences is not accepted)'
- Regarding Leave of absence – A leave of absence form must be completed prior to the absence taking place. The parent must make the case for the period of absence eg booking holidays because it is cheaper in term time is not an acceptable reason for holiday absence.

Registration

The school doors open at 8.45 am and children are expected to be in school by 8.55am this gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using RM Intergis. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule.

Lateness

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after 9am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and

will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently are not in school when the register is marked will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

See School Graduated Attendance Response by Group (Appendix 1)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.

Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a Leave of Absence Form (Appendix 2) available from the school office and handed in two weeks school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon

parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

See School Graduated Attendance Response by Group (Appendix 1)

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

National framework for penalty notices

The national threshold for consideration of legal action is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G). A session is a morning or an afternoon. One day is two sessions.

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

Children who are absent from Education

School follow the current Department of Education guidance regarding procedures schools must follow when children move school. School must inform the LA of any child that we believe has left and not provided forwarding information. If we are unable to establish a child's new school, we would have to refer them as an absent child to the Education officer.

When children leave Brockwell Junior school, at any point, we will follow correct procedures to ensure that the children have successfully transferred and are safe and in their new setting.