

Attendance Policy

Author: Briarwood School

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Contents

Section 1

Rationale

Objectives

Definition of Terms

Duties and Responsibilities

Section 2

Absences

Authorised Absences

Unauthorised Absences

Section 3

Monitoring

Links to other policies

Appendices

Section One

Rationale:

At Briarwood School we recognise the clear link between consistent attendance and academic achievement and pupil wellbeing. The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance; parents, pupils, governors and all school staff. Regular attendance at school is a legal requirement. As a school we expect the highest level of attendance from all students.

Attendance rates for special school are generally below those of mainstream schools because of the complex nature of some of our pupils' special needs. Unfortunately some of our pupils are more prone to illness and hospitalisation.

We also recognise the importance of close home-school partnerships in supporting our pupils' optimum attendance.

Objectives:

- * To create a shared understanding of the importance of regular and consistent attendance on positive outcomes for pupils
- * To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities in ensuring regular and consistent attendance for pupils
- * To ensure processes are in place to monitor attendance
- * To ensure all stakeholders are aware of support available to support attendance

This policy should be read in conjunction with our safeguarding policy.

Duties and responsibilities

Headteacher:

1. To have overall responsibility for whole school attendance.

Assistant Headteacher:

1. To liaise with Senior Leadership Team (SLT), teachers and administration staff.

2. To monitor the process for pupil absences
3. To identify persistent absences and set individual targets
4. To liaise with families, and where appropriate an Education Welfare Officer to develop intervention packages for pupils with persistent absences
5. Publish a mid-year and annual data reports

Teachers:

1. To keep accurate attendance registers at the beginning of each morning (any amendments for the afternoon sessions will also be recorded).
2. To indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised using the agreed coding system (see Appendix 1)
3. To identify pupils with poor or irregular attendance and inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team

Parents:

1. To ensure that their child attends school
2. To provide an explanation for any absences by phone, email or letter

Section Two:

Absences

The school accept absences for the following reasons:

- Illness
- * Self-Isolating following Government Covid-19 guidelines
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Term time absences for families with exceptional circumstances

The school will try to contact families where no information regarding the absence has been shared. This is to ensure the child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of a child's attendance or punctuality we will contact the family to discuss the best way forward.

Authorised Term Time Absences

In exceptional circumstances, families may need to request permission for their child not to be in school during term time. These requests will be made directly to the Headteacher and permission will be given at their discretion following careful consideration of the child's age, the time of year, overall attendance pattern and the circumstances given.

Unauthorised Absences

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays – unless in exceptional circumstances.

Section 3

Monitoring

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will formally monitor attendance data twice a year.
- Assistant Head will monitor the attendance data, using a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) system and the impact of attendance intervention programmes each term and report any concerns to the SLT.
- Unauthorised absences will be followed up to ascertain the reason, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken and to signpost to additional multiagency support. This may result in a referral being made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and a penalty notice being issued.
- Authorised term time absences will be monitored separately. A RAG system will highlight the number of request being made and provide an overview of time taken.
- The protocol for pupils who fall into the lower percentage of attendance is as follows:
 1. Attendance monitoring from the school leadership team in conjunction with the EWO.
 2. Regular meetings and contact with parents/carers.
 3. Involvement of a multi-agency team.
 4. If the above interventions are not successful and the attendance does not improve, a formal referral will be made to the EWO and their service will become activity involved.

Links with Other Briarwood Policies

- Home School Agreement Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes
- Appendix 2 – Guide for parents
- Appendix 3 – Process for monitoring pupil absence
- Appendix 4 – Reference List

Review Date: September 2022

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off Site (NOT dual registration)	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorized circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before reg closed at 9.30am)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after reg closed at 9.30am)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Present	Out for whole session
Y	Exceptional Circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
sym	Suspected Covid-19 case	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
SI	Self-isolating due to possible coronavirus exposure	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session

Appendix 2 – Guide for Parents/ Carers

1) When does my child need to be in school?

School opens for pupils at 9.00am. Your child should be ready in good time for the school transport to ensure that they arrive on time

2) Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. This will be followed up with a letter requesting this information if we are unable to contact you.

If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

3) What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Term time absences for families with exceptional circumstances (see question 6)
- Suspected Covid-19 – for example a continuous cough, temperature or change in taste and smell
- Self-isolation following possible exposure to Covid-19

Except in the case of illness or self-isolation, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details.

4) What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays – unless in exceptional circumstances.

5) Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school will try to contact you, if we have not heard from you. This is to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

6) Can we take term time absences?

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to not be in school during term time, you should complete an application form, stating the reason why. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to: your child's age, the time of year, overall attendance pattern of your child and the circumstances given.

7) What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

8) My child is reluctant to come to school. What should I do?

Contact the school to discuss any concerns or worries. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to resolve the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. Please contact the school if you would like the contact details of the Education Welfare Service.

Appendix 3 - Process for Monitoring Pupil Absence

Before school:

Parents to inform school by phone/letter of any pupil absence

Registration:

Teachers will complete the school register stating if the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Unauthorised absences will be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Where we have no reason for a pupil's absence:

If your child is absent from school, please contact the office by 9:30am to inform us. If we have not heard by 9:30am we will send a text message informing you of your child's absence and ask you to call the school office. If we have not heard from anyone by 10:30am, we will contact the emergency contacts for your child. If your child is then absent the following day and the school has not received a reason, then we may make a visit to your house to check that your child is ok.

Where contact with the family cannot be made, school may conduct a home welfare check and seek advice from the Education Welfare Team. This is to ensure that the pupil is safe and well and to offer families support to enable their child or young person to return to school.

Persistent Absences

The Assistant Head teacher, in liaison with the Headteacher, will contact the family to discuss the reasons for the absence and an action plan will be put in place to support. This will be treated sensitively and may require the involvement of multi-agency professionals.

Appendix 4 - Requesting a reason for a pupils absence

Template Text:

Dear _____. _____ is absent from school today. Please could you contact the school office on _____ to inform us of the reason for their absence.

Template Letter:

Date

Dear

Re:

Your child has been absent from school today but we received no message from you regarding this, we were unsuccessful in trying to contact you today.

We would be grateful if you could please confirm your child's absence by phone or returning the slip below stating the reason for absence.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Nicolle Deighton
Headteacher

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For the attention of the Office

Absence Reply Slip

Childs Name: Date(s) of absence

Reason for absence (please tick box) a) sickness ☐

b) appointment ☐

c) other reason ☐

(please state reason)

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 4 - Reference List

DFE (September 2020) "School attendance: guidance for schools - Covid-19 Addendum"

DFE (August 2020) "School attendance"

DFE (September 2016) "Children missing education"

DFE (January 2015) "Schools attendance parental responsibility measures"

DFE (November 2016) "Schools attendance"

Gov.uk notes (February 2017) "School attendance and absence"

Ofsted (August 2016) "School inspection handbook"

Taylor C (2012) "Improving attendance at school"