

Brown Clee C.E. Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY



‘Love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind’.

Matthew 22:37-38

Most recently reviewed: January 2024

Future review date: January 2025

SCHOOL POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE

Responsible people:

Head Teacher,
Class Teachers,
Administrator,
Parents and Carers

Relevant documentation used in the formation of this policy:

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (Department for Education)
[Working together to improve school attendance](#) (Department for Education)
[Government School and Attendance and Absence](#) (Gov.uk – Childcare and Parenting)
[Communicating with Families to Support Attendance](#) (Department for Education)
[Education Act](#) (1996)
[Children Act](#) (1989)

Policy developed to ensure:

1. The wellbeing and safety of pupils within the school.
2. That pupils are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.
3. That the amount of time that pupils are not in school for whatever reason is monitored.

Intentions

- Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all pupils
- To monitor and analyse regular lateness and work with parents to reduce this.
- To monitor and analyse regular or extended absence and take steps to resolve this.
- To work with Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to ensure no child is absent without school being aware of the reason.
- To ensure that discretionary power to grant leave for annual family holiday during term time is used in a limited way and frequent requests are referred to EWO.
- To use the School Information Management System to analyse and monitor pupils patterns of absence and work with parents to rectify excessive/unnecessary patterns.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure pupils take full advantage of time available to attend school.
- To ensure the well-being and safety of pupils.
- To monitor the amount of times pupils are not in school for whatever reason.
- To set targets for attendance.

Principles of Teaching and Learning

The school will endeavour to reduce the disruption to a pupil's education through avoidable absence and will endeavour to encourage an attitude within pupils that will not accept lateness or avoidable time off from school.

Equal Access and Outcome

All pupils will be dealt with the equal opportunities of attending school. Concessions will be made for pupils with severe physical disabilities or illnesses which require additional time for administration of medication and treatment. Please see the following policies for further details of equal opportunities – SEND; Disability Equality; Gender Equality and Racial equality.

Implementation

The school will...

- ...ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and be kept up-to-date on new legislation
- ...complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session.
- ...stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence.
- ...ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors.
- ...offer support in situations of persistent or severe absence/lateness

Parents will be able to access this policy on our website.

Continuity and progression

The policy will be updated in line with any changes in legal requirements.

Resourcing

The provision of lateness notes/absence letters and cost of postage will be met from the School Budget.

Reporting

A termly report will be provided at the full governors indicating levels of attendance (authorised and unauthorised).

All absences will be reported to the Educational Welfare Officer on their half termly visit to school.

Registration and absence procedures

ABSENCE CATEGORIES

Absences/lateness can be categorised in two ways: *authorised* and *unauthorised*. Authorised absences can be granted for a number of reasons but will either be for illness (which means they are unable to attend school), with advance permissions or in the very rare circumstances where children cannot physically get to school having exhausted all alternatives. Unauthorised absences are for reasons different to above.

Unauthorised absences will be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer. Authorised absences generally will not – unless pupils become “persistently” or “severely” absence (see definitions further below).

CLOSING OF REGISTERS

The school doors open at 8.35 am and registration takes place between 8:45 to 8:50am. After that time, any pupil who arrives will be recorded as being late. Our afternoon registers are taken again at 1.00 pm.

Persistent lateness can have a significant impact on a child’s education – as they will miss the first part of the lessons, which is often the most important. Therefore, in cases of persistent absence, we will contact parents to offer support to help with the causes of this.

Where possible all medical/dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. However, if this is impossible and the child is well enough to attend school, a child should only miss the time taken by the appointment. If the appointment is first thing, children should return to school once completed – whilst children should come to school and leave early if the appointment is later in the day. In cases of lateness or absences due to a medical/dental appointment, a letter must be sent to school confirming this. The absence can then be classed as a ‘medical’ absence and therefore ‘authorised’. If no appointment letter is received the absence/lateness will be classed as an ‘unauthorised’ absence.

REPORTING ABSENCES

It is a parent’s responsibility to inform school of the reasons for a child’s absence before 10.00am on the first day and to provide such further information as required. The process for notification is included as part of the school prospectus and indicates a phone call or contact on the first and any consequent days of absence.

If no contact has been made by this time, we will seek out contact (i.e. through phone calls to contact information provided to school). If we are still unable to make contact, to ensure that children are fully safeguarded, we will be required to take further steps (such as contacting the police to check that there is not a significant issue).

As is the school's duty, cases of unauthorised absences, and persistent or severe absences (see below) will be referred to the Local Authority's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

HOLIDAYS

As of 1 September 2013, there has been a change in the School Attendance Regulations. Where there used to be the option for headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during the term time in 'special circumstances' this has been removed.

Headteachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance.

Whilst it is recognised that there are exceptional circumstances when leave during the term may be requested, parents are asked to carefully consider the effects upon their children with respect to learning and relationships. If leave of absence is to be requested parents must complete an application form in advance. The following points will be considered prior to authorising the request:

- The child's previous attendance history
- The age of the child
- The child's stage of education
- The time of year (SATS, exams etc)
- The nature of the absence (exceptional circumstances)

Leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively. If a request has been refused by the head teacher and the parents proceed with the absence, this will be recorded as unauthorised and the Education Welfare Service will be informed. In such circumstances the Local Authority may serve a Fixed Penalty Notice.

ACTION ON REPEATED ABSENCE

"PERSISTENTLY ABSENT"

Persistent absence is where a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (i.e. any type of absence of more than 10%) over a specific time period (i.e. termly or across the academic year). In these situations, schools are required to seek reasons for this and take appropriate action to help support families with this.

Where a child is persistently late or absent, and the head Teacher has been informed, the following steps will be taken:

- A letter/email will be sent to the home informing the parents that this is the case - opening up communication so that school can offer and provide support to help.
- If lateness/absence persists then the parents will be contacted by the Educational Welfare Officer to further

"SEVERELY ABSENT"

Severe absences is where a pupil's attendance falls below 50%. In these situations, steps will have already been taken and reasons for absence should be fully understood by school. Further support and involvement of EWO will be used if deemed necessary.

REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

In cases of repeated unauthorised absences, schools and Local Authority's are required to conduct full children's social care assessment ([Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)).

Appendix 1: “Summary of Responsibilities for School Attendance” – DfE document (All Pupils)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>	<p>Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.</p> <p>Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.</p>

Appendix 2: “Summary of Responsibilities for School Attendance” – DfE document (Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so.</p> <p>Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.</p>

Appendix 3: “Summary of Responsibilities for School Attendance” – DfE document (Persistently absent pupils)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.</p> <p>Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children’s social care.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>	<p>Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and:</p> <p>Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders.</p> <p>Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.</p> <p>Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).</p>

Appendix 4: “Summary of Responsibilities for School Attendance” – DfE document (Severely absent pupils)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority..</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it</p>	<p>Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> <p>All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children’s social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p>

Appendix 5: “Summary of Responsibilities for School Attendance” – DfE document (Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:	Local authorities are expected to:
Not applicable.	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.</p>	Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.	Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.