

General Policy Document

Document Name: Attendance Policy

First Written Date: September 2023

Review Date: September 2024



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Next Review Date: September 2024



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Introduction

At Bramhope Primary School we believe that regular attendance is crucial if children are to benefit from their education and achieve their potential. In order for children to have good attendance, measures have been put in place to monitor and address concerns over attendance and absence. The attendance policy is shared at the start of each academic year. Parents are reminded about the school's policy through the weekly newsletter which is emailed every Friday.

Registration

A register is taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session by the teacher responsible for the class for that teaching session. The register is on our M.I.S. so it is saved directly to the central school data management system. This enables admin staff to monitor the attendance of pupils quickly and address any missing marks for pupils. National codes are used to record attendance and absence in a consistent way. Staff enter the marks to show that pupils are present. **Lateness is recorded if pupils arrive in school after 8.45am.**

Absences for Illness or Medical Appointments

Parents are encouraged to book medical appointments outside of school hours where possible. The formal end of the school day is 3:15pm providing adequate time for medical appointments after this time. If this is not possible, parents are asked to notify school before the appointment so that the attendance register can be amended to show why the child is not in school and to provide a scanned copy of the medical appointment letter. **Parents know to contact school on the first day of absence through illness. They should also contact school every day following this, if their child remains absent.** The administrator will ask the parent to describe the symptoms and these will be noted on our register. **If pupils have experienced any vomiting or diarrhoea, they cannot return to school for 48 hours**

Messages that are taken via the school office relating to pupil absence are put onto the system as quickly as possible so that teachers can see why a pupil is absent. **If no reason has been given for absence, then this will show up as 'N'.** Admin staff will phone all parents if we have no reason for absence. **If no reason is provided for the absence or there is not a legitimate reason provided, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.** The head teacher will be informed of any unauthorised illness by 9.30 am. If there are significant concerns about a child's attendance through persistent illness, then the school reserves the right to request medical evidence.



Leave of Absence

Occasionally, parents request leave of absence during term time. This should be done formally, using the exceptional leave of absence form, available from the school office. DFE and L.C.C. policy states that leave of absence cannot be granted by Headteachers unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requests should be made to the Headteacher at least 4 weeks in advance of the absence and each application will be considered individually before any leave is granted.

All parents are aware that there is no right to any leave or holiday in term time. The granting of leave of absence in school term is, by law, a matter of consideration and decision by the school. **Leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.** DFE guidance states that, as a general guide, any activity, holiday or event that can be arranged during the annual 13-week holiday should not be authorised. When considering leave requests, the school may liaise with other schools where siblings may attend. This allows for a consistent approach to authorising absence. **Following a request for leave of absence, parents will be notified in writing if the absence is authorised or not authorised.** If leave is granted, then the letter will state the number of days a child is authorised to be absent from school. There are Local authority procedures that need to be followed if a child does not return to school by the date specified on the request. In accordance with DFE policy, leave of absence due to religious observance will be authorised. **Parents will also be notified in writing if the absence is unauthorised and will be advised that, if the absence is taken, this may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued by the local authority.**

Penalty Notices

If the unauthorised absences take place, then a referral can be made to the Local Authority. Parents may then be issued with a Penalty Notice – one per parent per child, payable at £60 within 21 days and increasing to £120 within 21 to 28 days. Failure to pay the £120 within this time period may lead to court proceedings. The fines are issued by the local authority and the money from the fine is not received by the school. Where requests are received from only one parent the school reserves the right to contact the other parent to ensure that both parents are fully aware of the intended absence and the possible consequences of taking unauthorised leave during term time. Referrals can also be made if there are significant concerns regarding attendance and unauthorised absence.

Monitoring of Attendance

The attendance of children from Reception to Year 6 is monitored: The following systems are in place for addressing attendance:

- Each term an attendance tracker is produced showing every child's percentage attendance.
- The DSL and DDSL look at children's attendance under 95% with a particular focus on those under 90% (the figure classed as persistent absence). Parents may be contacted either by letter or phone

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informing them that their child's attendance and/or punctuality is low and a meeting may be requested.

- The school's attendance report is updated. This document is shared with governors regularly throughout the year.



The purpose of these meetings are to:

- Make parents aware of their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Ensure parents are aware that a referral to the local authority may be necessary if there are a significant number of unauthorised absences.
- Discuss reasons for absence.
- Look at additional support that may be available, eg. Family Support worker
- Look at strategies for promoting good attendance/punctuality, eg. Reward charts
- Raise awareness of the impact of good attendance on pupil outcomes.
- Ensure that parents understand the impact and possible consequences of further absence. If a child has not been at school and no contact has been made with parents, then a home visit by the Attendance Officer and/or headteacher may be requested by the school, particularly if there are any additional safeguarding concerns. **If a child is absent from school for 10 days and cannot be located, then the child may be reported to the local authority as CME – a child missing in education. There is also a statutory obligation to report any child to the local authority if there has been an absence for 10 or more days unless agreed as a holiday.**

Individual high attendance is acknowledged.

Although Bramhope Primary School does not award certificates for 100% attendance, we are appreciative of the efforts parents make to ensure their children attend school whenever possible.

Safeguarding

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and at Bramhope promoting the welfare of our children encompasses attendance, managing behaviour, access to the curriculum, health and safety and anti-bullying. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. When a child's absence is unexplained the school will contact the parents on the first day of absence. If the absence remains unexplained the school will try to establish the child's safety and whereabouts. The school will make reasonable enquiries such as ringing all emergency contacts and checking with neighbours and friends in school. School will make a CME referral as soon as possible when they have had no contact from a family, but no later than when the child has been missing from school for 20 days in the following circumstances:

- A child has left the country regardless of if a new address and/or new school information has been provided
- A child is rumoured to have moved out of the area.



- A child has moved to a different Local Authority and is not on the roll of a new school within 20 days of leaving your school

First Day Procedures for Non-Attendance

Registration is from 8.45-9am. If a child fails to attend within this period the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly. Therefore, parents/carers must inform school of their child's non-attendance by 8.30am via telephone/email.

If school is not informed of the reason for absence within the specified timescale the office staff will follow up via telephone or email, using all emergency contact details available if necessary. If the office is unable to contact parents/carers or establish the reason for absence the office will contact the attendance officer/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Continued attempts will be made to make contact with the parents/carers throughout the day.

The attendance officer/DSL will review the non-attendance along with any other relevant information to consider any further action. If there are concerns about the welfare of the child a home visit may be used to verify the safety of the child. This will be based on the known and potential risks for that individual. These risks could include previous concerns, information gathered from other sources, patterns of non-attendance and existing vulnerabilities.

Contact should continue be sought via telephone alongside a home visit. A home visit must be completed by two members of staff.

For children who are already working with other professionals, contact should be made with the case worker, social worker or family worker prior to a home visit where possible to establish any additional information or risks.

If contact at the home visit is unsuccessful, and there are increased concerns for the child's welfare, the DSL may consider requesting another agency, or the police in an emergency, to do a welfare check, if it is felt that a child is at significant risk of harm the DSL will make a referral to the local authority Multi agency screening team/hub (Leeds Front Door Safeguarding Hub).

Flow chart for following up unexpected non-attendance



School admin to make enquires to parent /carers then use all emergency contacts provided.

If no successful contact made, admin to inform DSL/attendance lead

DSL to make assessment of risk based on existing vulnerabilities and potential risks/harm

If still no contact made, the DSL may consider further action, including a home visit where possible and inform any existing agencies involved with child

If home visit is not suitable or unsuccessful and the school are unable to establish the safety of the child and where there is a risk of significant harm the DSL will immediately report concerns to the MASH Team or police (if appropriate)