

# **BRIZE NORTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Pupil Attendance Policy**

### **Introduction**

All children of compulsory school age have the right to a full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

Brize Norton Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

### **Statements of expectations**

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

### **What is expected of the Pupils**

- To respect themselves and others
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy

Parents have the prime responsibility and legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

### **What is expected of the Parents**

- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend school giving the reason for absents.
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn.
- A reason should be offered for any lateness
- To work closely with the school and Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special /exceptional circumstances.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### **What is expected of the School**

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of
- To meet the legal requirements set out by Government
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences within the guidance set
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LEA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

### **School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

#### **Recording**

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at **8.55am**. At **9.00am** the register is taken to the school office. Any late pupils will then be sent to the office. If

any pupil arrives late the office staff will record that the child has arrived late and follow this up if appropriate with the parent/carer.

The register officially closes at **9.30am** and any pupil arriving after this will be marked absent for the session. A reason for the lateness will need to be provided and a decision made by the school to mark it as an authorised or unauthorised absence.

Once a week the absences will be recorded onto the electronic registration system and all the present pupils marked present. The offered reasons for any lates or any absences will be assessed and the appropriate code entered into the system. The register is returned back to the class teacher before the start of the afternoon session and the register is again taken at 1pm.

Any unknown absence is investigated by a phone call home from the school office at 9.30am, where possible. Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone or by a letter prior to the child's absence. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence.

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The LEA has failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or the LEA has failed to make suitable transport arrangements
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their particular faith
- The child is absent 'with leave'. This refers to leave being granted by the school, not by the parent, and would normally relate to no more than 10 school days in any 1 year.

Where contact is not made on the first day of absence by telephone, the parents will be sent a letter within three days of the absence. Where there is no response to this letter, a second letter will be sent. Where there is no response to the school intervention and the absence has persisted without explanation the school will make a referral to the Education Social Work Service.

### Attendance codes

A set of standard codes are used consistently within the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

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 authorised circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Present	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness(not med/dental etc.appoints)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before reg closed)	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	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Present	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late( after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	DfES # : School closed to pupils	Attendance not required	Out for whole session

Y Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
X DfES: Non-com school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
# School closed to pupils and staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z DfES: Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
- All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session

## **Monitoring**

The headteacher and the EWO will review the attendance of all the schools pupils on a termly basis and any pupils identified as cause for concern or less than 80% attendance on a more regular basis. The headteacher will contact the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if after a two week period there appears to be no improvement the parents of the pupil will be invited to a meeting with the head teacher to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the pupil from attending. If the parent/s do not attend the meeting or after such meeting the attendance of the pupil does not improve a formal referral to the EWO will be made.

The electronic registration system provides many reports and information that assist the school to monitor attendance. These reports will be accessed when relevant and provide information to assist the school strategically manage attendance issues.

The EWO will also have access to this information and will use the reports to support their role.

## **Requests for leave of absence**

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave they are required to complete a request form which can be obtained from the school office. This is then completed and returned to the headteacher. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason by letter and the request will be noted in the electronic register. Leave of absence will **not** be offered to pupils for family holidays except under special / exceptional circumstances.

## **Official Register**

A copy of the electronic register will be printed weekly providing a paper version of the electronically stored information for the previous term. The register will also have an audit trail of changes printed with it to provide a 'history of change' for the registration period printed. The monthly printouts will be bound together to form a years record and stored for a period of 3 years in a secure location.

## **Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality**

- Class teachers will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.
- Attendance certificates are awarded to children at the end of each term for 100% attendance.
- Pupil attendance figures will be published with the annual academic reports.
- Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and an education action plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.
- Register checks are undertaken by the headteacher each month and parents informed if their child's attendance has fallen below 90%.

This policy was formally adopted by the Governing Body in November 2008.