



New Brancepeth Primary School

Attendance Policy

Updated: September 2017

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Under Section 36 of the Education Act 1944 parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full time education, whether by regular school attendance or otherwise. In most cases children attend school. Parents are thus primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend, and stay, at school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

Regular school attendance is important, without it the efforts of teachers will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places the children at risk and in some cases it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social behaviour. Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Parents are encouraged to see themselves as partners with the school in the education of children and to ensure that they maintain regular, punctual attendance. School is committed to working with parents and supporting parents in ensuring their children attend school regularly.

This policy supports the work the school carries out in relation to the Equality Act 2010. At New Brancepeth Primary School we treat everyone equally and fairly regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender identity
- Marriage
- Pregnancy
- Race and nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

AIMS

The aim of this document is to ensure that pupils are expected and encouraged to achieve maximum attendance dates in order to take full advantage of the educational and general opportunities available to them within the school.

- a) This will be achieved by:-
 - i) Providing a meaningful, caring, educational environment where the child feels respected as an individual and an important part of the school community.
 - ii) Developing a meaningful rapport with pupils and parents and ensuring they are aware of attendance requirements of the school.
 - iii) Having an accurate registration system which is used consistently throughout the school.
 - iv) Encouraging and celebrating good attendance.
 - v) Making full use of any support services and taking appropriate action in the case of pupils who fail to achieve satisfactory levels of attendance.

- b) For safety reasons, to be able to identify:-
- i) Pupils who are present e.g. in cases of fire.
 - ii) Pupils who are marked present but are not physically present e.g. hospital visits or work study.

RATIONALE

The maximising of attendance rates is one of the key tasks of schools. It is recognised that irregular attendance raises complex issues. Pupils may be failing to attend regularly for a variety of reasons. Some of these may be outside the immediate control of the school but the school should actively pursue the goal of regular attendance. Attendance needs to be recorded and persistent absence needs to be investigated and appropriate action taken.

CATEGORISING ABSENCE

Schools are required by law to record attendance every morning and afternoon and to distinguish between attendance and absence and within absence to delineate between authorised and unauthorised absences.

i) Unauthorised Absence

An absence is unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation has been received by telephone or letter authorising the absence. If no explanation is received initially it is necessary to provisionally code the absence as unauthorised, pending the receipt of a satisfactory explanation. Provisional entries should be confirmed as soon as possible but in any event by not later than two weeks after the start of the term following the absence.

A pupil arriving after the registration period may be marked as unauthorised and marked as absent for the session. If there is no satisfactory explanation for the lateness, received by telephone or letter, the absence should be treated as unauthorised. The register will be closed at 9.10 a.m. for morning sessions and 1:05 p.m. for afternoon sessions. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as unauthorised.

ii) Authorised Absence

Essentially authorised absences are all those absences which are not attributed to truancy i.e. due to:-

- Sickness however, where we have genuine cause for concern about the legitimacy of an illness we can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. We can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but will advise parents of our intention. We will not request medical evidence unnecessarily but may from time to time to support investigations. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, or doctors' notes.
- Receiving treatment at hospital, dentist etc.
- Religious observance by religious body to which parents belong.
- Failure of school transport involving children living over 2 miles.
- An approved public performance.
- Death of a close member of the family.
- Educational visit.
- Exclusion.
- Lateness after registration (where a satisfactory explanation for the absence is received by telephone or letter)

ABSENT CHILDREN

Parents of children who are absent should ring school as soon as possible on the day of absence to let school know the reasons the child will not be in. Our school admin team will contact the homes of any absent children after 9.15am to seek the reason for absence and ensure their safety if we have not received a telephone call.

LATENESS

If a pupil arrives late but before the end of the registration period he/she is entitled to an attendance mark. However, their name and the time they arrived will be included in the Late Book. Parents will be contacted if a child's name appears in the Late Book five times within a two week period. Children arriving after the close of register will be marked U. An action plan will be developed to support and improve the child's punctuality and will be monitored over the next half term. If there is no improvement in the child's punctuality, school will liaise with parents to complete and submit an Early Help Assessment, requesting additional support for the family. Lateness will also form part of half termly reports to parents along with attendance, effort and behaviour.

INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE ATTENDANCE

- Weekly whole class attendance award delivered by the attendance fairy.
- Those children with full attendance in any term will receive a certificate and a letter will be sent home.

SCHEME FOR RECORDING ATTENDANCE

The scheme for recording attendance is based on the L.A.'s Common Scheme for Recording Attendance and Absences, and is collected electronically. At the end of each term parents of those children with below 95% attendance will receive a letter inviting them to attend a meeting in school with the Headteacher. An action plan will be developed to support and improve the child's attendance and will be monitored over the next half term. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance, school will liaise with parents to complete and submit an Early Help Assessment, requesting additional support for the family. Attendance will also form part of half termly reports to parents on their child's attitude and behaviour.

HOLIDAYS

Head Teachers no longer have the authority to authorise holidays. Holidays will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. A request form must be completed and submitted to the school office (see appendix 1). This will be reviewed and discussed by the headteacher and if necessary governors and a decision will be issued in writing. We will only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If we grant a leave request, it will be for the head teacher and governors to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm. Any holidays taken during term time without authorisation will be treated as unauthorised and marked as G.

FOUNDATION UNIT

Nursery /Part-time pupils

The importance of regular attendance at Nursery (part-time education) is stressed from the outset. However, it is realised that attendance is dependant on an adult bringing and collecting their child each day.

If a child is ill or unable to attend, the parents are encouraged to inform the school as soon as possible.

The school does make full use of part-time places.

If a child does not attend for a period of time (3 weeks) with staff unaware of the reason, a letter is sent out to the home. If there is no response to this letter the place is then offered to the next child on the waiting list.

Full time pupils (Reception age) are subject to the incentives/ procedures as pupils in the rest of the school.

PENALTIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31st December.

School will always work closely with parents to facilitate attendance of children. We will consider every aspect of a pupil's case, including the involvement of other professionals, before judging whether or not to refer to the LA to issue a Penalty Notice (see appendix 2). This must include discussions with attendance support staff who have knowledge of or involvement with the family. Further support may be offered and can take several forms such as parenting contracts and orders.

Local authorities also have other powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order, or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Form for Request for Leave of Absence from School – New Brancepeth Primary School

Please note that there is no automatic right for pupils to be granted authorised absences for family holidays. New Brancepeth Primary School considers every request for holiday leave in relation to the criteria below.

Pupil Details	
Name	
Date of birth	
Ethnic Origin	
Class Group	
Address	
Sibling/s in other school and school attended	Sibling Name/s: _____ Year Group: _____ School: _____

Request for Absence Details		
Start date of requested absence		Total Number of Days
End date of requested absence		
Intended return to school date		
Reason for absence request which indicates exceptional circumstances (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)		
Name of parent / carer (print)		
Signature		
Date		

For School Use		
N.B. Due to the changes in amendments to School Attendance Regulations Head Teachers may not grant ANY leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances. From September 2013 parents will be fined if they choose to take their child out of school for more than 10 days unauthorised absence over a rolling 12 month period. <i>Exceptional circumstances will be extremely rare.</i>		
Absence approved?	YES	NO
Signature of Head Teacher		
Date		

Factsheet



Penalty notices to address poor attendance at school

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 Advice for Parents / Carers 2016 / 2017

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives full time education. You must ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time.

You will be **committing an offence** if your child fails to attend their place of education regularly and punctually, and if your child's school has not been given authorisation for the absences or late arrival. **You can be prosecuted for this offence.**

The High Court has confirmed that schools, not parents authorise absence from school. The final decision lies with the Head Teacher.

A parent is:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who has parental responsibility for a child / young person
- Any person who has care of a child / young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act

The Act gives powers to Local Authorities and other designated bodies to issue penalty notices to parents or carers for their child's non-attendance at school.

Penalty Notices were introduced under the Act because reducing absence from school is extremely important.

Missing school can:

- Damage children's achievements.
- Disrupt the school's routines.
- Affect other children's learning.
- Leave children at risk of anti-social behaviour, youth crime and child sexual exploitation.

Above all, missing school can seriously affect children's life chances and opportunities.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution. Receiving a notice means you have to pay a fixed amount of money (fine) for your child's non-attendance at school, and avoids court action so long as it is paid in full.

Fixed Penalty Notice Triggers

If your child has accrued 7 days or more of unauthorised absence in a minimum 12 rolling school week period, you could receive:

- A warning - requiring you to ensure no further unauthorised absences occur in a 15 school day monitoring period, otherwise you would receive a fine.
- A fine - the warning period does not apply to notices issued due to leave of absence in term time taken without permission, or other parentally condoned absence.

Leave of absence in term time

The law states Head Teachers should not grant any leave of absence in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you take a leave of absence without the school's permission, and this absence amounts to 7 days or more, you could receive a fine.

The Local Authority never takes enforcement action lightly, we would much rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance. However, the Authority will use these powers to ensure that your child attends school regularly. Should you require advice and support about attendance issues contact either your school / academy or the ONE Point Service on 03000 261111.

Fixed Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice is sent by first class post to your home and can be issued where unauthorised absences occur due to:

- Leave of absence in term time
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed
- To assist Year 11 pupils to engage in education
- Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- Inappropriate, parentally condoned absence.

A fine applies to **each parent** for **each child** who fails to attend school regularly. Where two parents / carers are issued with a fine for a child, **both fines must be paid.**

Payment within 21 days is £60.

Payment doubles to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day payment period, the Local Authority will bring a prosecution against you for failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school during the period. We are unable to accept part payments.

Other Information

There is no right of appeal once a fine has been issued. We can only withdraw a fine where:

- It should not have been issued
- It has been issued to the wrong person
- If it appears to the Local Authority that it contains material errors

If you believe that one of the above circumstances applies, you should contact the Local Authority immediately with evidence to support your view, or if you wish to make general representations.

Should you require further advice and support about attendance issues contact either your school / academy or the ONE Point Service on 03000 261111.

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

03000 261 381

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