

# Beech Hill School Attendance Policy



**Approved by:** Shameem Hussain

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**Last reviewed on:** October 2022

**Next review due by:** October 2024

## **Introduction**

Regular school attendance is essential for a child to achieve their full potential. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and achieve their full potential. As a Rights Respecting School we acknowledge under Article 18 and 28 of the UNCRC the importance of working together with parents/carers to ensure children have access to the education provided for them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.

**Article 18:** Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for their child.

**Article 28:** Every child has the right to an education

Beech Hill School seeks to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, where each member of the school community feels happy, safe and secure.

All school staff will work together with pupils and their families to ensure pupils attend school regularly and punctually.

The school has systems of incentives and rewards which acknowledge the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and we challenge the behaviour of pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

## **Legal Framework**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory age (beginning of term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday) receive full-time education suitable to their age and ability either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure parents secure education for compulsory age children and, where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation 2013 for England require schools to take the attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether pupil was:  
Present/Absent

The school will strive to maintain attendance above the national average by ensuring that all pupils and parents are provided with information, advice and support in order to do the following:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- Agree roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency in dealing with all matters relating to attendance and punctuality.
- Develop a comprehensive system for collecting and analysing attendance related data.
- Measure the impact of this on pupils' achievement and attainment.
- Implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
- Work closely with Education Welfare Services and other agencies.
- Recognise and support the needs of individual pupils returning to school following significant periods of absence.

**Parents/Carers will do the following:**

- Ensure their child comes to school regularly and punctually
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and expected date of return
- Try and avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make medical appointments outside of school hours
- Ask for help for their child if they are experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is avoidable
- Complete a leave of absence form to request leave from the Head teacher for exceptional circumstances
- Inform school of any change of address or contact details including telephone numbers.

**1. Maintaining Attendance as a priority**

- All staff to apply school Attendance Policy consistently
- Part of SIP to remain high profile
- Include comment on attendance and punctuality in reports to parents, staff and governors
- Keep parents informed about levels of attendance in newsletters etc
- Display attendance-related materials at focal points in school.

**2. Providing advice and guidance**

- Provide clear information for parents about attendance and punctuality.
- Provide opportunities to discuss attendance with pupils
- Involve parents at the earliest stage when there are concerns about a pupil's attendance

### 3. Procedures

- The school gates open at 8.20am
- The school doors open at 8.35am
- Morning registers will be taken at 8.40am
- External doors/gates will be closed at 8.45am and children arriving after this time should enter through the main office where they will be recorded as arriving late
- Registers will also be taken at the beginning of the afternoon session at 1pm
- It is the responsibility of parents to contact school before 8.30am if their child will not be attending school that day (where possible)
- **See Section 10. Monitoring Attendance for procedures**
- Pupils with attendance/punctuality issues will be invited to Breakfast Club.

### 4. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

- Only school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents (Section 199, Education Act 1993)

***Illness, Medical and Dental appointments*** – If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (i.e. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) and on production of an appointment card. A record is maintained by the school office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or returning the site. Children with sickness or diarrhoea must stay away from school for 48 hours following the last episode of sickness or diarrhoea to prevent illness being spread to other pupils and staff.

***Lateness*** – We actively discourage lateness as it can seriously disrupt lessons. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded. Obviously, the school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. If, however, a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Attendance Officer/Head Teacher in order to reach a satisfactory solution. **Late is arriving after close of registration.**

***Special Occasions*** – It is for school to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not; much will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. Generally, the rule is that only truly exceptional occasions will be sanctioned as authorised absence after discussion with the head teacher.

***Family Bereavements*** – The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. School has discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request will be dealt with sympathetically.

***Family Holidays*** - Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during

term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. However, this will only be granted for a limited number of days and extended leave abroad is not deemed as exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

All absences will be unauthorised and will lead to further legal action being taken by the LA.

Absence during the Phonics Check and SATs periods (May/June) will not be authorised for Y1, Y2 or Y6 pupils

For nursery children, please refer to appendix 3 of the local authority's service level agreement for early years provision in a school.

Parents who need to take a child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request or complete a Leave of Absence application form. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as **unauthorised**.

***Days of Religious Observance*** – Absence of a pupil for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong is classified as authorised absence.

***Other absences*** – Shopping trips, airport trips, birthday trips, days out and family holidays will not be authorised.

## **5. Unauthorised Absence and Sanctions**

Beech Hill School will endeavour to work with families to raise attendance and avoid persistent absence. However, in some cases it may be necessary to move towards statutory measures to improve attendance.

**Unauthorised holiday requests:** If a holiday request is unauthorised and the child is still removed from school to take a holiday within term time, a referral will be made to the Local Authorities Education Welfare Service with a request to issue a Penalty Notice (fine) to each parent in respect of each child. However, in circumstances where the leave of absence exceeds 15 days, the matter will not be dealt with by penalty notice but will be referred to the Magistrates' Court for their consideration.

**Persistent absence:** If attendance fails to improve (above 90%) despite the best efforts of the school to work with a family, this will be referred to the Local Authority for a Pre-Court meeting at the Beech Hill School or the Town Hall. School will provide evidence at this meeting. An action plan will be drawn up with a review date. If there isn't a significant improvement at the review, the Local Authority will undertake statutory action, which could result in penalty notices being issued to each parent in respect of each child, or alternatively the matter will be referred to the Magistrates' Court.

## **6. Collecting and analysing data**

- The school will register attendance using SIMS

- All registers will be marked in accordance with DFE regulations
- Absence logs will be monitored by the Attendance Officer/administrative assistant to establish trends in individual absence and target effective action
- All attendance data will be collated and analysed weekly, termly and annually to establish trends and to provide reports to governors, EWO, Local Authority and DFE.

## **7. Collecting children at the end of the school day**

- Children should be collected from the playground at 3.15pm. Any child not collected by 3.20pm will be taken to the office. Parents will receive one reminder regarding late pick up and from then on will be charged. See procedures for non-collection of a child.
- Any parent wishing to collect a child early for an appointment etc must contact the school and provide a copy of the appointment time before signing the child out from reception

## **8. Attendance Registers**

Registers should be marked at the beginning of each session on the SIMS program. The registers are taken at **8.50 a.m.** Any child not present at this time should be marked as (N) absent. The office staff will make a note of all children arriving late and subsequently add the data to SIMS. Absent children must not be marked as present even if the teacher knows that the child will be in school later. If a parent or sibling informs the staff that a child will be absent then the member of staff should inform the office.

## **9. Absence Procedures**

The Office Manager/Attendance Officer will oversee the daily absence sheets, detailing any incoming information regarding individual absence and courses of action to be taken. Further details will be logged and if no reason for absence has been received one week after the child's return the absence should be marked as unauthorised and logged for future EWO involvement where legal action may be taken e.g. final warning or penalty notice.

All children attending nursery provision, although not statutory school age, are automatically enrolled on the school's SIMs system and are expected to attend the 15 hours of free funding as requested by the parent/carer. Failure to attend will result in funding being withdrawn and the place reallocated.

## **10. Monitoring Attendance**

Parents need to inform school by 8.30am if their child is going to be absent from school. This might be via phone or Seesaw.

8.50 am Registers closed

8.55 am Office admin to check all registers completed

Office admin Update inventory with pupils signing late

Office Ensure all sicknesses/med appt noted on sims and input codes accordingly (from calls/seesaw/emails/answer machine)

Office admin Produce N Code Report and pass to Attendance Officer.

9.00 am Office admin to Send Text message to parents who have not contacted school. Attendance Officer to make first day absence call first named contact to establish a reason for absence or leave a message for them to call to school to notify and confirm the reason for absence.

10.30am If there is no response, school will ring will send a second text message and a home visit will be made by the Attendance Officer.

The Attendance Officer will contact the police and asked for a welfare call to ensure that all children are accounted for, and if we are unable to make contact following the above procedures. This procedure is in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and families.

The Attendance Officer will also contact the EWO if all other stages have been completed and there is still no contact regarding the absent child and inform them that the police have been informed.

The Attendance Officer to update CPOMS of actions

For afternoon Nursery same procedure as above.

## **11. Reward Systems**

- The class with the highest attendance in EYFS, lower and upper school will be rewarded weekly with a certificate of attendance and house points for each child.
- Individual pupils rewarded termly and annually with a certificate and a prize for 99/100% attendance.
- Pupils with above national average will be rewarded with a certificate of achievement at the end of the year.
- Praise in assembly is given weekly where the class attendance exceeds 96%.
- School Council regularly reviews pupils' suggestions for rewards.

## **12. Lateness**

Pupils who arrive late will be signed in electronically by a staff member, stating reason for late arrival; these are then logged on SIMS and recorded on the daily absence sheet. The daily sheet is analysed by the Attendance Officer and appropriate contact is made either by text, telephone, letter or in person.

Parents/carers of children who are late 3 times or more in any term will be contacted or spoken to by the Attendance Officer.

### **13. Medical Appointments**

Following consultation with parents, it has been decided to request medical cards or texts to support pupils' appointments at the doctor/dentist. These can be provided retrospectively. On leaving and returning from any appointment, pupils will be signed out/in electronically by a parent/carer. All appointment/medical notes will be added to the school's attendance file.

### **14. Attendance in Early Years**

Our setting wants to work with children and parents to ensure that we deliver early education to a high standard and provide planned learning activities to help children to progress.

To this end we will make every attempt to ensure that eligible children attend as many sessions as funding has been received for, bearing in mind occasional sickness or holiday absences.

We will monitor attendance for Early Education Funded children on a weekly basis to ensure that children receive a beneficial level of early education to assist them in progressing, and follow the procedure below for any cases of non-attendance or erratic attendance.

#### **Procedures**

If it becomes evident during weekly monitoring of attendance that a child is failing to attend all their requested early education funded sessions we will do the following:

#### **~ Erratic / non-attendance for 2 weeks.**

Have an informal discussion with the child's parent/carer to see if there are any problems which are preventing full attendance.

\* Diary / note this communication.

#### **~ Erratic attendance for a further 2 weeks (4 weeks in total).**

Request a formal parent/carer meeting to discuss the implications of attendance levels on the child's progress and place availability.

Offer a reduction in sessions funded as a possible solution.

\* Diary / note this communication.

\* Complete the Adjustment Task on the Provider Portal to reduce funded hours, where appropriate.

#### **~ Non-attendance for a further 2 weeks (4 weeks in total).**

If no contact or resolution can be established with the parent/carer, take this period in lieu of the 4 week notice period.

\* Diary / note this decision.

\* Complete the Adjustment Task on the Provider Portal to confirm the leaving date of the child.

**~ Erratic attendance beyond 4 weeks.**

If no resolution can be obtained prior to this period, contact Calderdale Early Years & Childcare Sufficiency Team to inform them of the situation and attempts to address it. They will advise whether continued funding is appropriate.

\* Diary / note this communication.

In compliance with Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2014; Early Education Funding Provider Agreement April 2015 – March 2016 Between the Borough Council of Calderdale and Providers.

**Record Keeping**

Any attendance records containing personal information will be stored securely and in accordance with the data protection policy.

This policy has been written and reviewed in accordance with the school's Equality Policy and is therefore in full accordance with all statutory responsibilities outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

*Reviewed and amended October 2022*

**Appendix 1**

**Escalation of Attendance Interventions when needed**

**Pupils with attendance between 97% and 100%**

Pupils will receive a letter home congratulating them on their child's good/excellent attendance.

Pupils will be rewarded and their names displayed in the newsletter

### **Pupils with attendance between 94% and 96%**

School will confirm with the parent why pupil is absent if parent does not contact school

Teachers will support pupils to catch up with their learning

Attendance Officer to speak to parents regarding the child's attendance and set a target and set a review date

Where improvement has not occurred following the intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This member of SLT will closely monitor attendance of the child.

The Attendance Officer will carry out home visit when the child is absent in the attempt to get the child into school.

EWO referral will be made

### **Pupils with attendance between 91% and 93%**

Deputy Head and Attendance Officer will meet with the pupil/parent to do the following:

- Identify any underlying home/school issue causing the pupil's absence
- Make arrangements for pupil to catch up with any work missed
- Work with the Attendance Officer to set a target
- Attendance Officer to closely monitor
- EWO Referral of attendance does not improve within 4 weeks of meeting
- Complete an Early Help pathway referral if required for multi agency support

### **Pupils with attendance below 90%**

Pupils who have attendance below 90% are considered to be persistently absent from school.

The Senior Leadership Team with the support of the Attendance Officer will do the following:

- Ensure that pupil/parent has already spoken to a member of staff at previous stages to discuss concerns and strategies to improve attendance.
- Additional support, where needed, has been offered such as breakfast or after school club.
- Ensure Parent/Carer is aware of next steps where attendance has not improved.
- If attendance fails to improve then the matter will be referred to the LA requesting a Final Warning or Pre-Court meeting at the Beech Hill School or the Town Hall. School will provide evidence at this meeting. An action plan will be drawn up with a review date. During the review period both school or the Education Welfare office will conduct home visits where needed to ascertain the reason for absence.

- Within the review period, if attendance does not improve then the matter will be referred to the LA requesting legal action.