

# Attendance Policy

## Beech Hill School



**Approved by:** Shameem Hussain

**Date:** September 2021

**Last reviewed on:** September 2021

**Next review due by:** September 2022

## Introduction

Beech Hill School aims to provide each child with a high quality learning experience, developing their potential and encouraging independence and confidence.

We aim to promote self-esteem, respect for ourselves and each other, cooperation and care for the community.

### 1. School responsibilities

The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.

### Registration

**2.1** Beech Hill school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers/teaching assistants are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes, see below (in accordance with DFE guidelines).

#### CODE DESCRIPTION MEANING

/ Present (AM) Present

\ Present (PM) Present

B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) Approved Education Activity

C Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) Authorised absence

D Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) Approved Education Activity

E Excluded (no alternative provision made) Authorised absence

F Extended family holiday (agreed) Authorised absence

G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) Unauthorised absence

H Family holiday (agreed) Authorised absence

I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) Authorised absence

J Interview Approved Education Activity

L Late (before registers closed) Present

M Medical/Dental appointments Authorised absence

N No reason yet provided for absence Unauthorised absence

O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) Unauthorised absence

P Approved sporting activity Approved Education Activity

R Religious observance Authorised absence

S Study leave Authorised absence

T Traveller absence Authorised absence

U Late (after registers closed) Unauthorised absence

V Educational visit or trip Approved Education Activity

W Work experience Approved Education Activity

X Non-compulsory school age absence Not counted in possible attendances

Y Enforced **full or partial closure** Not counted in possible attendances

Z Pupil not yet on roll Not counted in possible attendances

# School closed to pupils Not counted in possible attendances

## Lateness

**2.2** Any child arriving after the register has been called will be recorded as late for that session. If a child arrives late after the register has closed but their parent/ carer provides them with a note detailing a reason acceptable to the school, they are marked as authorised absence for that session. If they arrive late after the register has closed and fail to provide an acceptable reason they will be marked as unauthorised absence for the whole of that session. A U Code is used in the register to show that they are in school for Health and Safety purposes.

**2.3** Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance they have been given. The Attendance Officer will inspect registers regularly in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.

**2.4** Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality the school's Attendance Officer should be informed.

**2.5** If a child is absent the class teacher will not enter any code in the register, leaving the Attendance Officer to select the correct code for that absence. The school Attendance Officer will aim to contact by telephone, any parent who has failed to inform the school of the reason for an absence (first day calling – the primary aim being to check on the safety of the child). This phone call should be done, wherever possible, by 10.00am. Persistent absentees may be called by school before 9.00am to ensure that they are attending that day.

**2.6** All absence notes from parents/ carers should be dated and initialled by the class teacher and sent to the school office to be held on individual children's files. Only notes concerning absences about which there are concerns/ queries should be brought to the attention of the Attendance Officer/ Deputy Head Teacher (who may then choose to speak to the parents/ carers concerned).

## 2.7 Categorising Absence

- i. A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the headteacher.
- ii. Beech Hill School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at school will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.
- iii. If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- iv. Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example: a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority, a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered, in exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance.

(b) Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend.

(c) Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards or send him / her to school beforehand.

(d) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions.

(e) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

(f) In other exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) for a very limited period.

(g) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, eg a birthday
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission

## **COVID 19 Arrangements**

School attendance is mandatory and absences will not be authorised without good reason. Please note;

- Children who are in quarantine should not attend school
- Children who are self-isolating should not attend school
- Children with symptoms of coronavirus should not attend school
- Families asked to isolate by Track and Trace should not attend school
- Where shielding has been paused and any child who is themselves vulnerable or has a member of their family who is vulnerable should attend school unless they can provide written evidence from a consultant or paediatrician that it is not safe to do so
- Children should attend where school have complied with all coronavirus guidelines and it is deemed that it is safe for children to be in school (the harm from not attending school is likely to be more serious in the long term).

Where there are patterns of unauthorised absences or holidays taken in term a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service who may take action against you.

**2.8** Where children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over 5 days, the school will, send material home so that they can keep up with school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period or be a repetitive absence (such as necessary stays in hospital), the school will contact the Education Welfare Officer so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given tuition outside of school.

**2.9** The Deputy Head will regularly review attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the school's Attendance Officer and Governing Body. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify respective tasks and follow-up action for both the school and attendance service.

### **2.10 Improving Attendance**

The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:

- i. Daily first day calls to children who are persistently absent
- ii. Daily calls/ texts to chase up absent children
- iii. Daily home visits to persistent absentees
- iv. Breakfast club is offered to children to help improve their attendance
- v. Weekly attendance certificates for KS1/2
- vi. Weekly prize draw for children who come to school on time and every day for a week (T Shirt raffle)
- vii. Referrals to EWO
- viii. Attendance panels with parents
- ix. Attendance monitors in every class
- x. Intervention Programmes for targeted children

## **2. Parent/ Carer Responsibilities**

**3.1** Parents/ carers have a legal duty as well as a moral obligation to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full time basis.

**3.2** Parents/ carers should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason (such as sickness) they should contact the school as soon as possible and before 9.00am on the first morning of absence. This may be done by phone, note or in person. School should then be kept informed on a day to day basis.

**3.3** When a child returns to school after a period of absence a note should be brought in by the parent/ carer to explain the absence. If a child has a medical appointment a note may be sent to school on the day prior to the absence, but we would ask that parents/ carers make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

**3.4** Parents/ carers may not authorise their child's absence as on the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parent/ carer.

**3.5** Parents/ carers should ensure that their child arrive at school in time for the start of the school day (9.00am). If a child is late they should report to directly to the school office.

### **3.6 Leave of Absence Requests:**

Requests for leave of absence should be made at least 2 school weeks in advance, you can collect a request form from the school office. All requests will be considered on an individual basis. Each application will be assessed on an individual basis taking into account the following criteria:

- i. Current Attendance must be over 97%
- ii. Impact on Learning
- iii. Are there Exceptional Circumstances; this will be decided by the Headteacher.
- iv. No leave will be granted within the first ½ term of the academic year (September – October half term) unless in extreme exceptional circumstances
- v. No leave will be granted for children in years 2 or 6 due to preparation for SATs
- vi. If a leave has been taken in the previous academic year no further leave will be granted

vii. The leave doesn't exceed 10 school days

**Wherever possible children shouldn't be taken out of school for any reason other than illness.**

#### **4. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE:**

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.

**4.1** 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 the family.

**4.2.a** Persistent absence: If attendance fails to improve (above 85%) despite the best efforts of the school to work with a family this will be referred to the Local Authority for a Final Warning **or Pre Court meeting** at the Town Hall. School will provide evidence at this meeting. An action plan will be drawn up with a review date.

- **4.2.b** Penalty Notice: In the case of Persistent absence, if the Final Notice meeting fails to make a significant improvement Beech Hill School will make a provide evidence and make a referral to the local authority to issue Penalty Notice in the first instance, **which will then lead to legal action if not paid within 28 days**. A Penalty Notice would be issued, at the request of the school, whenever a pupil had accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any 8 week period. This would be irrespective of the reasons for the absence. The only criteria would be that the Headteacher had not authorised the absence.

#### **Record Keeping**

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

#### **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;

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

Have an informal discussion with the child's parent / guardian 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 totalled).**

Request a formal parent / guardian 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 totalled).**

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

\* Diary / note this decision.

\* Complete the Adjustment Task on the Provider Portal to confirm that 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.