



Attendance Policy

This policy meets the requirements of the Education Act, 1996 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Date approved: July 2015

Date of Next Review: July 2017

Amended April 2016 to be in line with BF Fixed Penalty Protocol (2015)



Article 28

Every child has the right to an education.

Introduction

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupils' education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

WHY?

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the schools attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your

child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, School with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

School Practice

In line with the Government and Local Authority guidelines:

- Registers are taken twice daily. In the morning at 9.00am and in the afternoon at 1.00pm.
- Parents, guardians or carers should always telephone the school office before 9.30am if their child will not be attending school.
- First day calls are made by the School Office if the school has been given no prior notification of a pupil's absence.
- A written explanation must always be given when the child returns to school.
- Staff will bring to the attention of the Headteacher/HOY or as appropriate of those pupils who are seen to be developing a pattern of absence.
- The Headteacher or Family Support Advisor (FSA) will write to the parents, guardians or carers of those children whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Parents, guardians or carers may be asked to meet with the Headteacher or FSA to discuss absences.
- Should absences persist with no improvement then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Absences during term time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the headteacher of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Parent Action

- Parents must request leave as far in advance as possible.
- Applications to be made in writing on the schools 'leave of absence form', giving the reason for the request

School Action

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. ***If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.***

AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. **There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.**

Lateness

Pupils learn best when they arrive punctually at school. The school day begins at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in school at the time. Registers are open at 8.50am and close at 9.30am. A pupil will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in the classroom at 9.00am when the registers are taken.

Any pupil arriving late should enter the building through the main entrance and report to the school office. Their name will be entered in the late register with the reason. A member of the office staff will then send the pupil to their classroom. Parents are discouraged from taking their child to the classroom and disrupting teaching. If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an **unauthorised absence** although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety regulations.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem with the Headteacher or FSA.

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

The Role of the School Management

Pupils learn best when parents and staff work in partnership to maximise pupils' attendance at school and everyone is clear of expectations and procedures.

- The school has an obligation to enquire and challenge the reasons for pupils' absences and/or lateness and do insist on written evidence for any such absences.
- There is also an expectation that the staff report concerns over absence and lateness to the Headteacher or FSA.
- The school will send letters to parents, guardians or carers as to their child's current attendance level, unexplained absences or lateness's or any other concerns.

- The school collects information daily and weekly from the registers on absences. This information is forwarded to the Local Authority and Department for Education.

The Role of the Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that “if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence.”

Bracknell Forest Council, through the Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. A Penalty Notice may be an appropriate intervention in the following circumstances:

- Where there is a minimum of 10 school sessions of unauthorised absence (5 school days) in any 10 week period (these do not need to be consecutive);
- Where term time leave is taken without obtaining authorisation from the school;
- Unwarranted delayed return from term time leave without authorisation;
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed (U code) on 10 or more occasions in a 10 week period;
- Parents’ or carers’ failure to make arrangements to ensure that children who have been excluded from school are not in a public place at prescribed times during the first five school days of any exclusion, without reasonable justification*;

*It is incumbent upon the parent(s) in such circumstances to provide proof of reasonable justification, for example, that the child or young person needed to attend a pre-arranged medical appointment, or a medical emergency requiring the child to be supervised elsewhere than at home. No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year. When two Penalty Notices have already been issued in an academic year the matter will be referred directly for prosecution for a third offence in the same year or in the following academic year.

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The Fast Track framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. Fast Track involves engaging the parent and specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually 12 weeks). Parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates Court.

Please see: Bracknell Forest Council: Code of Conduct & Protocol for the Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (2015) (<http://schools.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/bf-protocol-for-fixed-penalty-notices-2015.pdf>)

Promoting Good Attendance

We celebrate excellent attendance throughout our school, with certificates awarded to individual children during the academic year (September to July).

What parents can do to help

Please work with the school staff and ensure you are fully aware of the schools attendance policy as this has a huge impact on a pupils' learning.

Parents must:

- Not condone your child's absences
- Telephone the school each day that your child is unable to attend school due to illness
- Send a written note to the school when your child returns
- Avoid appointments during the school day

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- Talk to your child's class teacher/tutor in the first instance

Governors

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Application for Leave of Absence during term time (Effective from 1st September 2013)

Wildmoor Heath School, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Government believe that absence during term time should be avoided as they can have a damaging effect on pupils' education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that there may be exceptional reasons that may justify authorisation of the absence by the Headteacher.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

“Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the Headteacher of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application”

As a result of the changes, we at Wildmoor Heath School have revised our attendance policy, which from 1st September 2013 will include the following:

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- Application is to be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office and downloaded from the school website
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed within 10 school days as to whether the request is authorised or unauthorised.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If the penalty notice is not paid, each parent (or guardian / carer) may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to a maximum of £1,000, plus costs.



Mr. G Strudley
Headteacher

LEAVE OF ABSENCE FORM

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM AND READ INFORMATION OVERLEAF:

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013: Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the headteacher of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application

Pupil Name

Date of Birth

Class/Form/Year

Home Address

First Date of Absence

Date of return

No. school days absent

Exceptional reason for absence

Name of parent (who child resides with)

Home telephone no.

Mobile telephone no.

Email address

Signature of parent

FOR HEADTEACHER

DATE RECEIVED

CURRENT ATTENDANCE %

LAST YEAR'S ATTENDANCE %

EXCEPTIONAL REASON ACCEPTED

YES/NO

NAME AND SIGNATURE

DATE PARENT INFORMED

THIS ABSENCE HAS BEEN AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED. WE THEREFORE EXPECT YOUR CHILD TO BE IN SCHOOL ON (DATE) _____