



Attendance Policy

Signed by

Headteacher: *D Lacey*

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Chair of Governors: *C Brown*

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We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve their best. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so important?

Learning:- Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding:- Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying
- Child Protection
- Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details of attendance on our website and on Class Dojo
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Provide 'first day' calling to ensure we record reasons for absence;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events;
- Celebrate attendance successes through our weekly assemblies;
- Reward 100% attendance with certificates and annual prizes
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school;
- Work alongside School Attendance Officers in an attempt to minimise absences

The Law Relating to Attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs/he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, Local Authority Officer or the Police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The Law Relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the secretary of state with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under 18.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to Shirley Manor Primary Academy using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a present mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor or individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority's Education Safeguarding Team.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible and before 9am on the first day of absence.
- Telephone the school office 01274 679320 from 8:00am or send a Dojo message to one of the admin team.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or message you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Carry out a home visit if your child is absent and we are not able to contact you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or a member of the Local Authority's Education Safeguarding Team;
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority's Education Safeguarding Team if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone Numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Help us to help you and your child, by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't, then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the matter to the Local Authority's Education Safeguarding Team.

He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the Local Authority themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice attendance@bradford.gov.uk.

Start times, registration and how we manage lateness

The school day begins at **8:30am** and we expect your child to be arriving in class no later than this time. The school gates will be opened just before 8:30am and will close at 8:45am. Registers are marked at **8:40 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in school by that time. Children arriving after 8:45am should enter via the school office to be signed in and confirm lunch arrangements.

At **8:55 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence**. We record the number of minutes absent on a regular basis and when the total of minutes late reaches a certain point then further action is taken. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Lateness is not acceptable as it disrupts lessons and may lead to more serious absence. Punctuality is an important life skill which must be taught and encouraged. Frequent lateness is not only disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and their peers, but can also be embarrassing for the child arriving late into a lesson. Poor punctuality will be discussed with parents of those pupils who regularly arrived late to school and have unauthorised absence. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the School Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time

Children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress in their learning. **Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time.** Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off during term-time to go on holiday.

Schools have discretion to allow up to 10 days leave of absence if they believe that the circumstances warrant it. Special circumstance may include:

- for service personnel or other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside of term time
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS), or end of term assessments.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

At Shirley Manor Primary Academy, we are working hard to improve attendance, please help us by ensuring your child attends regularly and is always here on time.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure the highest level of attendance is achieved, and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Links to Related Policies

Safeguarding Policy, Parent Partnership Policy, Behaviour Policy