

Attendance Policy

The Brook Primary Special School



Approved by:

The Governing Body

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1. Aims

The Brook Primary special school is committed to providing all pupils with an appropriate and effective education in a safe and happy environment.

We aim to meet our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and that any absences are reported punctually and appropriately.

At the Brook, each child is welcomed, valued and respected and is encouraged to respect themselves and others. We aim to empower all of our children to gain the essential skills – both academic and social – that will equip them to lead the lives they choose in the future.

We believe that education is essential for all. To achieve their full potential children need to attend regularly and punctually. Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue that must be treated promptly and seriously. Early action needs to be taken in every case of non-attendance.

Our Governors, the Head and Senior Leadership Team and staff acknowledge that there is a strong correlation between high attendance and pupil progress.

In order to promote good attendance Governors and staff will:

- Provide a welcoming and safe environment where all members of the school community are valued and respected
- Ensure that all school staff work with the pupils and their families to enable regular School attendance and punctuality and to support and challenge families who do not prioritise this
- Establish an effective and efficient system of communication with the parents, carers and appropriate agencies to provide information, advice and support
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data in order to address any issues which become apparent (Poor attendance of individuals or groups in school)

- Promote effective, supportive partnerships with the education welfare service and other services and agencies
- Ensure that parents/ carers are aware of the DfE guidance relating to holidays taken in term time and understand the impact that this has on their child's progress
- Understand that, for some pupils, their condition means frequent unavoidable absence through illness or medical appointments and will recognise that the needs of individual pupils may require considerable planning following significant periods of absence

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Timing of the school day/Transport

The school runs from 9.00am until 3.30pm. The majority of pupils are brought to school by LA transport and the times for pick up and drop off are arranged by the Transport department.

The register for the first session close by 9.45am. The register for the second session closes by 1.45pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). It is not the responsibility of transport staff to relay this information.

Notifying the school of unplanned absence

Parents/carers must phone the school by 9.15am in any case of absence to indicate the reason for the absence and the possible length of absence. This should be done on a daily basis

Telephone number: **020 8808 7120**

3.3 i Authorising absences

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Absences are authorised for the following:

- **Absence due to illness** will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.
- **Medical or dental appointments**
Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Parents need to write the details of the appointment prior to the day of the appointment in the pupils' home-school book or phone reception.
However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- **Days of religious observance** where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- **Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes** – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- **Exclusion** whether fixed or permanent should be regarded as authorised absence. Exclusions are very rare at the Brook and cannot exceed 45 days in any academic year.
- **Unexpected personal circumstances** such as bereavement or domestic emergency will be considered on a case by case basis.

3.3.ii Absences are unauthorised for the following:

- **Lateness** after closure of the register
- **Inability to establish contact** with parents/carers

- **Family holidays.** There is no parental right to take children on holiday in term time. This can result in legal sanctions (see 4.2 below)

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

- If a parent does not notify the school directly of their child's absence, then a member of the School's admin team under the supervision of the Family Liaison Officer will phone the parent. This is 'first day calling'
- If it is not possible to establish contact with the parents then a home visit will be made. If this does not result in personal contact then the child will be deemed 'Missing from Education' and a safeguarding referral will be made

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents are given attendance information termly and attendance information is also recorded at the Annual Person Centred reviews and in the Annual Progress Report. Pupils' whose attendance falls below 92% receive a letter and this is also followed up by the Family Liaison Officer to establish what support the school needs to put in place to improve attendance. If there is no improvement then options as outlined in 3:3:ii may be enacted.

4. Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is rewarded by children with 100% receiving certificates and stickers at the end of each term and an engraved cup is given to any child who achieves 100% attendance throughout the year.

The fortnightly Brook Billboard constantly reinforces the importance of regular attendance on children's progress and wellbeing and the named Family Liaison officer, Felicia Rock, provides parents with a named contact with whom to discuss issues. Addressing non-attendance at the earliest opportunity is also a very significant strategy.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). They are expected to call daily if they are unable to state at the outset how long their child will be absent.

If a pupil's absence goes above ten days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. However, the disability or impairment that the child has may well impact on their attendance and this will be taken into account when pupils' absence is monitored.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. Out attendance targets and data fall in line with the national targets for schools with pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism and are aspirational. They are not, however, directly comparable to mainstream schools.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Members of their class team may carry out the recording, but it remains the class teachers' responsibility.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy
COVID-19 response policy

