



# Bromley Hills Primary School Attendance Policy

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### **Attendance Policy**

#### 1.0 Introduction

At Bromley Hills we recognise that regular attendance at school is crucial in raising standards of education and in ensuring every child can meet their full potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Therefore, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

#### The Government expects:

Schools and Local Authorities to:

- Reduce absence including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Act early to address any patterns of absence;
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend early and ensure that all pupils are punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly.

(Department for Education – Advice on School Attendance (www.education.gov.uk)

#### What the law says about School Attendance:

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receives a full time education. This is achieved by regular attendance at school. All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a full-time education. Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1966 says: "If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, without reasonable justification, then his/her parent is guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted".

Children are required to attend school for 190 days (380 sessions) in any single academic year (SeptemberJuly). The school expects all children to attend every day that the school is open and on time for registration. Absence that falls below 90% is categorised by the Government as persistent absence.

Only the school can approve absence. The school does not authorise absence without good reason and is not bound to accept the reason presented.

We believe that;





\* Prolonged and consistent absence, in any year group, affects access to the curriculum ultimately impacting on progress.

#### \* Repeated and consistent lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school.

As a school we follow the Department for Education, DfE, guidelines and expect children to maintain an attendance figure above 96% throughout the academic year.

#### Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary
- School and higher education, employment or training.

#### Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (March 2013):

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Therefore, a member of staff will carry out a home visit if there is a concern about safeguarding.





#### 2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee and co-ordinate the schools work in promotion regular and good attendance. The school is responsible for the accurate recording and monitoring of attendance and that the policy is consistently used. The Senior Leader in charge will ensure that issues are identified in an early stage and that support can be offered and put in place prior to attendance becoming an issue.

#### **Parents/Carer**

- To ensure their child attends school regularly and is properly equipped and in a fit state to learn every day that school is open
  - Ensure that their children are punctual, *registration takes place at 8.55am*
- To notify the school every day of absence by 9.30am. All absences will be recorded as 'O' unauthorised until an explanation or evidence is provided. The onus is on the parent to inform the school and provided appropriate evidence;
- As in the work environment medical and dental appointments should be booked outside of the school day whenever possible;
- Providing written explanation of absences on the first day a pupil return to school;
- To provide the school with up to date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental
  responsibility. If contact details change then we must be informed of new details within 24 hours;
- If a 'Leave of Absence' is required for exceptional circumstances, it must be made in writing (using the application form available from the school office) to the Headteacher 15 days in advance of the proposed start date of the absence. The circumstances you consider 'exceptional' must be detailed
- Collecting their children on time
- Avoiding taking holidays in term time
- Avoiding requesting non-urgent leave of absence;
- Working with the school to improve matters if attendance becomes a problem;
- Keeping school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and their child in school;
- Supporting the Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school;

#### Pupils

- To attend school regularly and promptly;
- Arriving at school on time, registration is at 8:55am,
- To attend morning and afternoon registration promptly;
- Knowing the value of good attendance;
- Supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school.

#### Teachers

- Set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- Ensure that registers are taken at the appropriate times and are accurate and up to date;
- To take appropriate action when pupils are late;
- To monitor class and individual attendance patterns;





- To inform SLT/Deputy of any concerns about attendance or where attendance is impacting on a pupils achievements;
- Discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations;
- Praise pupils for good punctuality and good attendance.

#### SLT

- To have a named member of SLT responsible for attendance;
- To set clear and challenging attendance targets as part of school self-review;
- To ensure that all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- Monitor trends and arranging for letters to be sent when triggers are hit;
- Target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- Develop a multi-agency response to the attendance agenda;
- Utilise the support of available specialists in relation to the attendance agenda;
- Have a system in place for parents to report a child's absence;
- Report to the Governing body the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets;
- Promote the importance of good attendance through assemblies;
- Publicise good attendance during assemblies and newsletters;
- Reward good attendance;
- Responsible for Authorising Absence by adhering to DfE guidelines. When it becomes necessary making a referral to Dudley Council, Education Investigation Service (EIS).
- To schedule a home visit from a representative of the school if no contact has been received within 5 days.

#### Administrative staff

- Send a text message
- First day calling for children absent without explanation,
- Call all numbers on the contact list in order until receive an answer.
- Leave a voice message, if there is a voicemail option.
- Overseas ring tone and no leave of absence requested Child Missing in Education may be contacted
- Call the contact list at least twice.
- To issue first day contact methods ie, letter, text message, visit, if no other response.
- To monitor late entrants into school and adjust Integris accordingly along with the time of arrival;
- To forward phone messages to class teachers regarding absences ie, enter notes on Integris;
- To monitor individual and class attendance;
- Contact parents when a school have not been provided with a reason for absence;
- Record reasons for absence on Integris;
- Record medical appointments on Integris and state whether medical evidence has been seen;
- To monitor register coding and alert staff of inconsistencies;
- To produce reports as requested by EIS
- To produce attendance figures for end of year reports;
- To undertake reporting and update SLT.





#### 3.0 Attendance Celebration

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

#### 4.0 Procedures

#### Late to School in the morning and afternoon

Registration happens in the classroom and not when a child arrives at school

Registration starts at 8.55am and finishes at 9.05am. However, registration can remain open until 9.25am

If a child arrives for registration in the classroom before 9.05am they will be marked as present code (/)

If a child arrives in school before 9.05am but does not get to the classroom for registration before 9.05am then they will receive the late code (L). If a child arrives at school after the main doors have closed they will need to enter via the office by a parent/carer, or adult, and a reason for the lateness given. This will be marked as late (L). Children in Years 5 and 6 can bring a note from home with a reason, as they may not be accompanied by an adult. If a child is late due to doctors/medical appointment please make the school aware of this.

The school will monitor late marks for individual pupils and will contact and support parents/carers in ensuring that the child/ren arrive to school on time to minimise learning time lost.

#### Late collection at the end of the school day or after school events

The school day ends at 3.25pm. Sometimes we receive messages at the end of the day to say that parents will be late collecting their children due to traffic or other unforeseen circumstances and we accept that sometimes this happens. However, some parents regularly collect their children beyond 3.40pm and sometimes beyond 3.55pm. It is not the duty of the school to provide childcare beyond the end of the school day, unless there are unforeseen circumstances, and contact with the school has been made.

In order to prevent children being left at the school office, at the end of the school day, each family has 3 opportunities, per academic year, whereby a child can be collected late due to unforeseen circumstances. After these 3 opportunities the school will be issuing a charge for the childcare we are providing.

For every 15 minute block a child/children are left at school at the end of the school day there will be a £5 charge per child e.g. if one child is collected at 3.41pm there will be a charge for the 15 minutes child care provided 3.25-3.40pm. If a child is collected at 3.55pm there will be a £10 charge for the childcare 3.25-3.55pm and so on. *Please note this is per child not per family.* 

For clarity if a child is collected at 3.35pm there will be no charge but it will be noted as making a late collection and one of your opportunities to collect late will be lost. If a child is persistently being collected between 3.25 and 3.39pm to avoid the late collection charge then we can administer penalty charges on an individual basis.

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#### **Attendance and Illness**

If a parent or carer considers their child has an illness which may warrant them remaining at home then they must:

- Consider first of all whether they feel that their child would still be able to take part in the majority, if not all, of the school's activities. In this case, they should still send their child to school. Should the child become unwell during the day and/or if the school feels that they are no longer able to participate in school activities, the school will contact parents to collect their child.
- If parents feel that their child cannot take part in the school's activities and would be better remaining at home then they must contact the school on 01384 816940. The school has a dedicated answer phone system for registering your child's absence option 1. Please leave a message before 9.30am. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of this policy. The person ringing will be asked to identify themselves and clearly give the reason for the absence. This information will be recorded.
- This needs to be done every day of absence (unless your child is admitted to hospital, or has a long term illness-related absence for a period of time in this instance you do not need to ring every day).

If your child is not in school and we have not had a phone call by 9.30am one of our Office Staff will contact you to find out why your child is not in school.

The school also has a Medical Policy that contains information about time allowed for certain illnesses e.g. 48 hours for sickness bugs in line with the Public Health guidelines.

#### Leave of Absence Request

It is now necessary, for all parents to seek 'Leave of Absence' at least 15 school days before you are intending to take your child out of school. This can be done by completing a 'Leave of absence' form and given to the Headteacher. In order for the Leave of absence to be authorised it would have to meet the following criteria;

- A parent/primary carer has a life limiting illness
- Other circumstances which are considered to be exceptional (This does not include examples such as: 'Holiday of a lifetime', 'Special family birthdays', 'Cheaper holiday deal' or visiting relatives abroad)

A leave of absence request must be made by the parent/primary carer with whom the child normally resides.

## Note: All holidays/Leave of Absence, of 5 days (10 continuous sessions) or more, will be referred to Dudley Council, Educational Investigation Service, who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.





#### **School Closures and Number of School Days**

The academic year is 190 days. These are recorded as 380 sessions, an am and pm session per day. Schools are also required to have an <u>additional 5 days</u> that are used for staff training. These are often called INSET (In Service Training) Days. These days are <u>not part of the 190 days</u>, which is every child's free entitlement and schools endeavour to schedule these to minimise inconvenience to parents and carers.

The Headteacher will make every effort to ensure that the school remains open for 190 days. However, in some circumstances, eg severe weather, the school may have to close. The Headteacher must always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person, who uses the school site, pupils, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors. If at any point, use of the school building would be detrimental to a person or persons' health, safety and welfare, then the Headteacher must close part or all of the school.

If a decision is made to close part or all of the school, the Headteacher will endeavour to inform parents of that decision and the details of any arrangements that have been put in place. If the Headteacher decides to close part or all of the school, then the register for those pupils affected is closed for the day and coded as an enforced school closure. This does not affect a child's attendance record.

Parents should always assume that the school will remain open during term time unless they hear otherwise.

#### 5.0 Dudley Council, Education Investigation Service (EIS)

The Education Investigation Service (EIS) is responsible for ensuring that parents meet their legal obligations in respect of their child's education and in doing so they may issue penalty fines or take legal proceedings to ensure that parents do so.

The Headteacher and Governing Body of each school have a responsibility to inform the EIS when a child's attendance becomes a matter of concern and to support the EIS in the actions that they may take.

#### Poor attendance

School is responsible for making a referral to the Education Investigation Service (EIS) when a child has been absent from school for at least 12 sessions of unauthorised absence within in a 6 week period. There are two sessions per school day, a session is a morning (am) or an afternoon (pm), so **12** sessions is the equivalent of **6** days off school.

Prior to the referral to Dudley Council, Education Investigation Services:

- 1. School will inform parents of their child's attendance progress in writing, offering them to contact the school to discuss reasons impacting on their attendance.
- 2. If there has been no improvement, the school will write to parents informing them that a referral to Dudley Council, EIS will be may result in a Fixed Penalty Fine or legal action if unauthorised absence continues to occur.
- 3. A member of school staff or School's Attendance Support Officer may undertake a home visit or invite parent/s to an attendance clinic to speak to them when there are ongoing attendance concerns or school have failed to establish a response relating to the child/children's absence.





#### Sanctions

A Penalty Notice is £60, if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt. The payment must be paid directly to the Local Authority, the school does not receive the money. Parents can only be prosecuted if 28 days has expired and full payment has not been made.

Where a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parent could be guilty of an offence under

- Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 If the child is absent without authorisation then the parent is guilty of an offence. This is a strict liability offence i.e. all that needs to be shown is a lack of regular attendance. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1,000.
- Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 an aggravated offence. If the child is absent without authorisation and the parent knew about the child's absence and failed to act then the parent is guilty of an offence. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months.

#### Parenting orders

Parenting orders may be issued by magistrates following the conviction of parents or carers or on the application of the local authority for failing to send their child to school regularly. As part of the parenting order, you will be required to:

- fulfill certain tasks such as taking your child to school each day;
- attend parenting guidance sessions.

If you fail to do this, you will be in breach of a court order. This matter will return to court and further fines could be imposed.

#### Prosecution

If you fail to meet all of the above, you may be prosecuted. This could result in each parent or carer receiving a fine of up to £2,500 and / or three months imprisonment for failing to ensure your child regularly attends school.

#### **Exclusion**

Parents and carers can be issued with Penalty Notices if a pupil, who has been excluded, contravenes the details set out in the Exclusion Letter as to their whereabouts during the first 6 days of exclusion.

<u>Section 103 Education And Inspections Act 2006</u> places a duty on parents in relation to an excluded pupil; a parent has to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first **five** days of each and **every fixed period or permanent exclusion**.

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#### **Deletion from the school roll**

Parents need to be aware that their child's name may be deleted from the schools roll if your child does not return to school within any agreed time or the date the absence has not been authorised.

This action will be taken in consultation with the local authority who may agree to the removal, upon any return you will have to reapply for admission to a school within the borough. A place at your previous school cannot be guaranteed.

#### Referrals

Dudley Council, Educational Investigation Service will also accept a child missing from education/removal from school roll referral from school when a child has had 20 sessions (10 days) of continuous unauthorised absence and school are unable to locate the child or they have not registered at another school.

#### Leave of Absence

From 1 September 2017, there are now new rules for unauthorised absence in term time. In Dudley, the Education Investigation Service will instigate statutory intervention on behalf of the Local Authority, when notified that a pupil has a relevant level of unauthorised absence. This may result in a Penalty Notice being issued to a child's parents or carers and the penalty charge will be per child, per parent.

When a child has had at least **10** continuous sessions of unauthorised absence coded on registers as "G" then school will make a referral to Dudley Council, EIS.

DMBC EIS may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) – Leave of Absence (Holidays 5 days or more) The Headteacher and Governing Body of each school have a responsibility to inform DMBC EIS if parents choose to elective home educate their child/ren or if there is a concern that a child is missing in education.

Education Investigation Service Floor 2 3-5 St James Road Dudley West Midlands DY1 1HZ 01384 814311

Absence during term time for holidays is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance. For more information on EIS and when penalty fines may be issued please refer to Dudley Local Authority website

http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/learning-school/parental-support/dudley-education-investigation-service/





#### 6.0 Attendance Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. School staff are committed to working with children and parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

#### Wise up

Strategies to encourage good attendance are:

- Wise Up 5 attendance categories. Red & Wise Up level. Bronze (93-94.9%), Silver (95-96.9%), Gold (97-100%). Certificates & badges awarded 3 times each year. Gold achievers displayed in class.
- 100% attendance for a term and for the whole year- certificate and prize.
- Every half term a group of children (Year 1 & any children new to the school with attendance issues) will have their attendance tracked. Those reaching their attendance target will receive a prize.
- Class of the week certificate presented in assembly together with an attendance trophy.
- Half term class champions attendance cup presented in assembly.
- Class of the Year certificate and special trip at the end of the Summer term for those with 100% attendance.
- Attendance notice board with school target and figure achieved.
- Class Attendance charts showing weekly percentage and an up/down arrow in designated class attendance area.

Parents can track their child's attendance figures throughout the year. Wise Up attendance reports will be sent out at the beginning of the Spring, Summer and Autumn Terms. Attendance on these reports is banded to indicate if it is satisfactory or not. The bands are as follows:

- Gold 97% +
- Silver 95-97%
- Bronze 93-95%
- Red 90-93%
- Wise Up Below 90%

Children receive badges or awards for achieving Bronze, Silver or Gold levels. Sending out the reports and making the awards at the start of a term/year is to make sure everyone has attendance fresh in their minds on their return to school.

Attendance figures for the year will be given on the child's school report at the end of the Summer Term and this includes an authorised/unauthorised breakdown. Page | 12





Parents of children with an attendance below 90% during a school year will be contacted by letter at the start of the new school year. Progress will be tracked throughout the year.

#### What happens when 5 days/10 sessions or more of school are missed?

If your child has more than 5 days out of school, within a 6 week period, at any time over an academic year due to illness and/or holiday, then every time your child is absent after this you will be required to provide further information, detail or evidence so we can consider whether the absence can be authorised.

If no evidence is received by the school, the school may involve the School Health Adviser. You may be asked to attend a meeting with the School to discuss how to improve your child's attendance. Following this meeting you could be issued with a warning notice from Dudley Council Education Investigation Service.

## What happens when 10 consecutive days/20 sessions (without contact from parents) of school are missed and all of the absence is unauthorised?

If your child is absent from school for 10 consecutive school days without contact from parents we must inform the Education Investigation Service.

#### What happens when 12 days/24 sessions or more of school are missed over a period of 12 weeks?

If it is a combination of reasons – including holiday - then you will be informed by letter that further absence will not be authorised.

You may also receive a home visit from a representative of the school, you will be aware of this taking place as a note/letter from the school will be left at the property stating the date and time of the visit. The next steps will be that your child's absence will then be scrutinised on a **weekly basis**.

#### Irregular Attendance

Irregular attendance and patterns of absence are monitored weekly. Attendance below 90% are targeted, as well as patterns of absence. School staff issue letters to inform parents if attendance is causing concern.

School staff may visit the home of children whose attendance is being monitored. Parents may also be invited into school to discuss attendance matters. School may request that medical evidence is produced to evidence a child's absence.

The Head Teacher may decide to remove the right to authorise absence due to illness and record any absence as 'unauthroised'. The Head Teacher will notify the parent of this decision in writing. In order to avoid this, it is essential that parents inform the school of any health concerns that may be affecting their child's ability to attend school regularly.





#### Long Term Sickness Absence

If a child needs to be hospitalised for 3 days or more we can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that they work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would be coded as 'B' which means that your child is being educated off site and would not affect their overall attendance percentage.

If a child leaves hospital and following this, is at home for 2 weeks, then we can contact Cherry Tree Pupil Referral Unit and they will support the child at home. This would use the 'D' code meaning the child is dual registered with ourselves and Cherry Tree. It is schools responsibility to liaise with Cherry Tree and ensure that a suitable education is being provided.

#### Can a school place a pupil on a part-time timetable? DfE School Attendance November 2016

As a rule, no. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing to a part-time timetable a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

#### Unacceptable reasons for absence

It is not acceptable to assume your child can have days out of school for the following events;

- Moving House
- Funerals
- New babies
- Other child in family is sick and parent cannot get other child to school
- Parent on holiday and child staying with a relative relative cannot bring child to school– it is expected that other arrangements are made with family members/neighbours/friends to bring your child to school
- Parent sick on a long term basis and cannot get child to school it is expected that other arrangements are made with family members/neighbours/friends to bring your child to school
- Inclement weather i.e. severe snow if you live within a 1 mile radius of the school, unless there is a babe in arms in the household, or you live in a remote setting, you are expected to get your child to school.





#### Other unauthorised reasons are:

- Buying new school shoes/summer uniform because parents forgot to do it in the holidays
- Going to the caravan to avoid traffic
- Waiting in for the builders/Gas man/delivery driver to arrive
- Only Year 6 matters
- Holidays are cheaper
- Parent/Carer being sick/illness

#### **Dealing with Truancy**

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant then the school will inform:

- The parent/carer;
- The police

All truants will receive:

- Sanctions;
- Support;
- Discussions to understand the seriousness of the matter;
- A programme of monitoring and support.

The Police must be informed **immediately** if a pupil leaves school without prior permission.

#### **Children moving schools**

If a parent indicates that their child is leaving the school they will be requested to complete a form stating their new address, school etc. (This is in addition to the LEA transfer form for moves within borough.) The forwarding details forms are supplied to Foundation Stage and the school office.

Office staff contact the nominated school re UPN, start date, removal from our roll.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Mr Jon Stevens (Headteacher);
- Mrs Daksha Patel (Attendance Assistant);
- Ranuka Jagpal (Chair of Governors with responsibility for attendance).





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