

# Bramham and Shadwell Federation

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Adopted by the GB  
March 2022

Date to be reviewed: March 2024

School Policy

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair



The Bramham & Shadwell Federation Attendance Policy aims:-

- To raise attainment and achievement levels by having high expectations of attendance
- To report to parents/cares where attendance and punctuality are a concern
- To work effectively with our various partners to maintain high attendance levels

Child attainment and achievement depends on regular presence in school. Any absence leads to missed learning and other experiences and may cause difficulties with social relationships. These can encourage an increased pattern of non- attendance.

Encouraging good attendance is the shared responsibility of the school, the parent and partners in the Local Authority. Parents have a responsibility to see that their children receive the appropriate education and it is the responsibility of the Local Authority through its Attendance Services to ensure that this happens.

### **Aims**

- maintain high expectations in relation to attendance; all parents/carers should be aware that every day counts and that their children's attendance is important;
- To encourage and celebrate good attendance
- To safeguard children through monitoring attendance, particularly of vulnerable pupils

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy with particular regard to Section 16, Children Missing From Education.

### **COLLECTION OF DATA**

#### **Registration**

#### **Shadwell Primary School**

Morning registration takes place at 9am. Any child arriving after this will be recorded as late. Children arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session. For either a late or an unauthorised mark, a comment is added regarding the number of minutes that the child is late.

- Morning = 1 session    Afternoon = 1 session

All class teachers are responsible for the sending of registers to the office on time.

Afternoon registration takes place at:

- 1pm for all classes

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## **USE OF DATA**

The efficient and speedy collection of the data is essential to the development of effective strategies for action. Data is required to monitor:

Individual absence and lateness at school

Patterns of lateness and absence and the identification of trends by

Year Groups

Groups of children eg. SEND, Pupil Premium

Seasonal patterns

Patterns and nature of unauthorised absence.

## **AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Authorised absence is where the school accepts there is good reason for absence. An authorised absence requires a written, SMS message or telephone communication from the parent/carer. A child's own word cannot be taken as reason for absence.

SMS messages / phone calls are sent from the Federation office after 10am and are made on the first and every successive day of absence unless word has been received from parents about reasons for an extended absence.

Children who return to school following an unauthorised absence will require a written note to justify the absence otherwise the absence will remain unauthorised.

**All absence related issues should be directed to the Federation offices.**

**Unauthorised absence is any absence which does not fall into the following categories:**

- a) Absence caused by illness or other unavoidable cause. If a child has higher than average illness then parent/carers may be asked for an official medical note.
- b) An approved absence for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- c) Special circumstances approved by the Executive Head Teacher and/or the attendance panel.

For information concerning extended leave see section below.

## **ILLNESS**

At the Bramham & Shadwell Federation we understand children do become ill and we wish to support families so that attendance can be as high as possible, while acknowledging that specific medical conditions / disabilities may reduce attendance.

If your child has higher than average illness i.e. 3 days in the Autumn term, 5 days in the autumn and spring term and 7 days for the whole year the school may follow this procedure:

- a) Write to parents to make them aware we are concerned about the amount of time their child/ren are absent from school due to illness
- b) Request the intervention of the Well Being Mentor, if not already involved
- c) Illness will not be authorised unless evidence is seen. Where evidence is not provided absence will be marked as unauthorised.
- d) Where illness is marked as unauthorised for more than 5 days in any 12 week period, further intervention may be sought from Attendance Services and the child may be placed on the Fast Track Attendance Improvement Initiative.

## **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

The Bramham & Shadwell Federation expects that parents will take their holidays during the approved school breaks. It should be noted that there are 175 days each year when children are on holiday from school.

- Parents must notify school of all holidays in writing using the Exceptional Circumstances Leave Form – available from the school office or downloadable on the website in the Policies section
- If your child is absent, and we have not had the Exceptional Circumstances Leave Form submitted to the school office, the Federation will look into this as with any other absence.
- School will respond to the request and will explain the holiday is unauthorised and will explain all possible implications.
- A penalty notice will be issued by Leeds City Council for unauthorised absences for 10 sessions or more within a 12 week period, this includes absences for holidays as well as other unauthorised absences. (for example, a parent could be issued with a £60 penalty if their child misses 1 day of school each week over a 5 week period, whilst another parent might be issued the same penalty for a single 1 week absence)
- A fixed penalty notice will be £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days of issue. If paid between 21 and 28 days the fine will then double. If not paid after 28 days the parent/carer may face prosecution.
- The penalty notice is charged by Leeds City Council. The monies are not collected or received by the school.

### **EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE**

In very exceptional circumstances and only then if your child has an excellent attendance record (97% or over) may the Executive Head Teacher permit up to 10 days absence and this must be requested in advance. If you take your child out of school when exceptional circumstances has **NOT** been granted, the absence will be recorded as 'parentally condoned truancy' and may be referred to Children's Services Attendance Team and you may be at risk of a fixed Penalty Notice.

Should your child be granted exceptional leave your child must return to school on the agreed date. If they do not we will have no alternative but to start proceedings, registering your child as 'a child missing education'. This could put your child at risk of losing their place in school.

This approach is to be reflected in all documentation provided for new and existing children.

### **Red, Amber and Green (RAG) Monitoring System**

In order to monitor attendance and provide a clear and simple way to identify problems we have adopted the RED, AMBER, GREEN (or RAG) monitoring system.

Pre-pandemic, the Federation operated a system of reporting whereby parents received a half-termly letter colour coded to indicate their child's level of attendance. The letters were coded as follows:

<b>GREEN</b>	-	<b>Excellent attendance</b>	<b>97% and above</b>
<b>AMBER</b>	-	<b>Borderline Attendance</b>	<b>94% to 96.9%</b>
<b>RED</b>	-	<b>Poor Attendance</b>	<b>93.9% and below</b>

Depending on the colour of the letter parents/guardians may have been asked to attend the school to discuss how we could help to raise the attendance level.

### **PERSISTENT ABSENTEES**

Children with absence below 92% will be flagged to our Well Being Mentor.

### **FAST TRACK ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE.**

This initiative was used pre-pandemic which has affected attendance significantly. The Federation will consider how/when to reintroduce this or a similar initiative.

The Fast Track Attendance Improvement Initiative is a quick way to address irregular school attendance. All pupils with unauthorised absence under 97% were placed on the initiative. The initial contact was be in the form of a telephone conversation.

Once on the Fast Track Attendance Improvement they were be monitored for 20 days and if there were any further unauthorised absences a School Attendance Panel was held. At the end of the meeting the parents/carers may have been issued with a Fixed Penalty Warning Notice. The child's attendance was then be monitored again for a short period. If during that period of monitoring there were further unauthorised absences the case was referred into Leeds City Councils Children's Services for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

The Fast Track Attendance Improvement Initiative could be implemented in September based on attendance during the last 12 weeks of the previous academic year.

Please see the chart at end of this policy.

### **FOLLOW UP**

It is important that parents/carers are aware of absences and lateness and of their responsibility to account for all such events, and that all action taken is documented.

There is a range of situations where the school needs to respond:

1. Unauthorised or unexplained absence – Telephone call by 10am first day and noted on database  
Unexplained absence of three days or more, when a child has not returned to school - telephone call with a written record.
2. A pattern of absence - parental notes, over a period of weeks followed by parental agreement, which could lead to the child being placed on the Fast Track Initiative.
3. Persistent lateness covering more than 5 sessions in any one half term – parental notes followed by possible parental contract
4. Persistent lateness and absence – Fast Track Initiative possibly leading to a referral into Children’s service – Attendance Team which could lead to **fixed penalty notices or ultimately court proceedings which could lead to fines or parenting orders.**

**Bramham School Actions to alleviate persistent lateness for specific children in including those who are in receipt of pupil premium funding**

A breakfast club that opens at 8.30am with food and a drink. There is a selection of activities to encourage the children to come into school early. Discussions will be made with the children to identify their preference of activity.

The key leaders in the implementation of this policy are the Head teacher, Well Being Mentor and SLT working with the School Attendance Services in conjunction with Children’s Services.

Actions will include:

- Monitoring and analysing data making appropriate links to achievement
- Implementing attendance action plans
- Promoting consistency throughout the school
- Issuing appropriate rewards e.g. Attendance Certificates
- Liaising with the Attendance Strategy Team

On a regular basis the Head teacher should discuss with the other key leaders:

1. Half termly attendance statistics for each pupil to highlight trends;
2. Details of children undergoing attendance related casework;
3. Details of children placed on the Fast Track Initiative - outcomes

**Lateness**

**Persistent lateness is often a significant indicator of under achievement.**

Lateness to school must be acted upon and parents made fully aware of the school’s expectations concerning punctuality. Dealing with lateness to school is the Attendance Team responsibility. Persistent lateness will be followed up by parental notes, home visits and possibly a parental agreement.

**For safety reasons late children must be signed into school by an adult.**

## **Rewards**

The importance of good attendance is regularly promoted during lessons and assemblies. Before the COVID pandemic, a variety of rewards were given for consistently high attendance.

As a class

Weekly celebration of the class with the highest attendance is done collectively. This is announced by the children in Celebration assembly. If any class achieve 100% they get 15 minutes extra playtime.

Individually

There is a bronze certificate for 100% attendance for Autumn term

Silver certificate and a silver star badge for 100% attendance for Autumn and Spring terms or for the Spring and Summer terms.

Gold certificate and gold star badge for 100% attendance for the whole year.

During and post-pandemic these use of these rewards has been stopped; the Head teacher and key leaders will consider when/how to reintroduce these.

## **Communications**

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring their child attends school every day and punctually.

Home school agreements.

Parents have a right to be provided in good time with the necessary information from the school which would enable them to meet these obligations. This includes:

The times of the school day

School dates and holidays

School procedures relating to attendance and punctuality

School expectations regarding lateness

Prompt communication of matters causing concern

The school expects that all parents communicate with the school in writing, electronic communication or telephone, giving a reason

(i) In advance of any planned absence

(ii) By 10am on the first day of absence

Further non-compliance on the part of the parents will be documented. A record of all communication will be kept.

The Attendance Team within school are trained in strategies for following up Children Missing from Education.

## **Children's service – Attendance Services**



The Bramham & Shadwell Federation works closely with the Attendance Services to improve attendance, punctuality and reduce persistent absenteeism. The Federation will refer to the Attendance Services when we feel all available interventions have been tried with a family and the next course of action would be legal proceedings, in cases where a Fixed Penalty Notice is required and when a child is missing education.

### **Reintegration**

When long-term absentees return to school it is important that they are sympathetically treated by all staff. Re-integration plans are drawn up by the Executive Head Teacher/Executive Deputy in liaison with the class teacher, child and parents/carers.

### **New Children**

The importance of good attendance and punctuality is clearly expressed when children join our schools in Reception and within school year transfers and forms part of positive partnership working between school and parents.

### **A Way Forward**

An attendance policy will not in itself improve attendance overnight, but it does provide a consistent set of strategies within which the whole Federation can work.

The Federation cannot take on every attendance case at one time, but it is not unreasonable to expect a team to target a certain number of cases with the aim of improving the overall attendance rate.

### **Roles Checklist**

#### **Key Leaders in School**

- Monitor all children in the vulnerable attendance category
- Make phone calls home and follow up with letters where attendance is a concern
- Send out a positive attendance message to help to keep the link between attendance and attainment firmly in the minds of class teachers and children
- To liaise weekly to identify children causing concern and to communicate all action to the Head teacher
- To talk with children and parents re unsatisfactory attendance and agree improvement strategies
- To arrange/attend reviews in school
- Monitor unauthorised holidays and request Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Hold school attendance panel meetings when needed.
- To complete CME referrals
- Carry out termly Fast Track Initiatives as appropriate
- To monitor and analyse attendance data
- To review and evaluate school's attendance policy

- To monitor work of school's key leaders
- To report periodically to Governors

#### **School Office**

- Collect daily messages
- To maintain and update pupil roll
- Oversee first day calls
- Inform class teachers of relevant information
- Share information with Well Being Mentor
- Follow up unexplained absences

#### **The Attendance Team (Children's Services)**

- To issue Fixed Penalty Notices
- To complete relevant checks and keep school updated when school complete a CME referral.
- Preparing evidence for court action including application for education supervision orders

#### **Complaints**

If parents/carers are dissatisfied with any aspect of the schools handling of attendance issues they should put their concerns in writing for the attention of the Executive Head Teacher. If complaints cannot be resolved the matter can be taken to the Governing Body.

