

Bramham and Shadwell Federation

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Adopted by the GB
June 2022

3/24



1. AIMS

The Bramham & Shadwell Federation Attendance Policy aims:-

- To raise attainment and achievement levels by promoting and maintaining high expectations of attendance and punctuality. To promote a culture within school where all parents and carers are aware that every day counts and that their child's attendance at school is important. To encourage and celebrate good attendance.
- To ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- To safeguard all children, particularly vulnerable pupils, through monitoring attendance and to act early to address patterns of absence. To ensure all staff recognise that regular absence, particularly unexplained absence, can be a red flag for safeguarding concerns. To follow up absences, ensuring that children are given support with pastoral and safeguarding concerns.
- To work effectively with parents, EPOSS Attendance Officer and partners in the Local Authority to maintain high attendance levels.

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

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.

It is now recognised that some absences can be related to 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance' (EBSA – MindMate Champions September Issue 36 2022) and the Federation will take this into consideration when dealing with such related absence.

Encouraging good attendance is the shared responsibility of the school, the parents/carers 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 Team to ensure that this happens.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department of 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:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Body

The Federation's Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the schools on a termly basis. It holds the Executive Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Executive Head Teacher

The Executive Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy across the Federation
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring all children in the vulnerable attendance category
- Sending out a positive attendance message to help to keep the link between attendance and attainment firmly in the minds of class teachers and children
- Review and evaluation of this policy

Senior Leaders

The Senior Leaders are responsible for:

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers where attendance is a concern and agreeing improvement strategies and monitoring implementation of attendance action plans
- Liaising weekly to identify children causing concern and to communicate all action to the Executive Head Teacher
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data – and making appropriate links to achievement
- Monitoring unauthorised holidays and requesting Fixed Penalty Notices
- Carrying out termly Fast Track Attendance Improvement Initiatives as appropriate
- Liaising with Local Authority Attendance Team and holding school attendance panel meetings when needed
- Completing CME referrals
- Promoting consistency of policy application throughout the school
- Issuing appropriate rewards to pupils e.g. attendance certificates

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.

School Office Staff

School office staff are expected to:

- Collect daily messages from parents about absence and record it on the school system
- Undertake first day of absence calls and follow up unexplained absences
- Inform class teachers and Senior Leaders of relevant information
- Maintain and update pupil roll
- Send weekly report to EHT and AHT for groups of children in each school to monitor attendance, including watch list.

Attendance Team (Children's Services)

The Attendance Team of Leeds City Council's Children's Services department is responsible for:

- Completing relevant checks and keeping school updated when school complete a CME referral

- Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices
Preparing evidence for court action including application for education supervision orders

4. RECORDING ATTENDANCE AND COLLECTION OF DATA

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the second session of the day.

Morning registration takes place at 9am and afternoon registration takes place at 1pm.

Any child arriving after 9.10am 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.

Registration 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.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

USE OF DATA

The efficient and speedy collection of the attendance 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 e.g. SEND, Pupil Premium
 - Seasonal / weekly patterns
 - Patterns and nature of unauthorised absence.

UNPLANNED ABSENCE

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school office by a written message or a telephone communication on the first day of an unplanned absence by 10am (or as soon as practically possible) and each successive day of absence (unless word has been received from parent/carer about reason for an extended absence).

A reason for absence must be given.

A child's own word cannot be taken as reason for absence.

A pupil who returns to school following an unplanned and unauthorised absence will require a written note from the parent/carer to justify their absence, otherwise the absence will remain unauthorised.

All absence related issues should be directed to the school office.

- **ILLNESS**

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the 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 the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment confirmation 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/carers will be notified.

If a child has higher than average absence (**<95% attendance**) because of 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 Federation may follow this procedure:

- a) Write to parents/carers to make them aware we are concerned about the amount of time their child/ren are absent from school due to illness.
- b) Request appropriate intervention, if not already involved (see appendix 1 EPOSS flowchart)
- c) Where illness is marked as unauthorised for more than 5 days in any 12 week period, further intervention may be sought from Attendance Services Team and the child may be placed on the Fast Track Attendance Improvement Initiative.

PLANNED ABSENCE

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides documentation of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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 necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

LATENESS AND PUNCTUALITY

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (9.10am) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed (after 9.30) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

For safety reasons late children must be signed into school by an adult at the school office.

Persistent lateness is often a significant indicator of under achievement.

Lateness to school will be acted upon and parents/carers will be made fully aware of the Federation's expectations concerning punctuality. Persistent lateness will be followed up with communication with parents, home visits and possibly a parental agreement, and may involve the Attendance Team.

At Bramham Primary School to alleviate persistent lateness for specific children, including those who are in receipt of pupil premium funding, we hold a daily 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.

FOLLOWING UP ABSENCE

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the Federation will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason. A member of the school office team will make a telephone call to the parent/carer after 10am on the first day absence.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

REPORTING TO PARENTS - RED, AMBER, 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.

The Federation operates a system of reporting whereby parents receive a termly letter colour coded to indicate their child's level of attendance. The letters are coded as follows:

GREEN	-	Excellent Attendance	97% and above
AMBER	-	Borderline Attendance	94% to 96.9%
RED	-	Poor Attendance	93.9% and below

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

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

APPROVAL FOR TERM-TIME ABSENCE

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see Section 4)
- 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 the 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.

The Executive Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence for pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the discretion of the Executive Head Teacher.

We define '**exceptional circumstances**' as:

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 using the prescribed Exceptional Circumstance Leave form available from the school office or downloadable on the school website in the Policies section.

If you take your child out of school when exceptional circumstances have **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.

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 / not at school.

Parents must notify school of all holidays in writing using the Exceptional Circumstances Leave Form.

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.

LEGAL SANCTIONS

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.

6. ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND 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 school office on first day of absence 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 Attendance Improvement Initiative (see below).
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 Attendance Improvement Initiative possibly leading to a referral into Children’s Services – Attendance Team which could lead to fixed penalty notices or ultimately court proceedings which could lead to fines or parenting orders.

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

FAST TRACK ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE

The Fast Track Attendance Improvement Initiative is a quick way to address irregular school attendance. All pupils with unauthorised absence under 97% are placed on the initiative.

The initial contact is in the form of a telephone conversation. Once on the Fast Track Attendance Improvement Initiative, the attendance of the pupil was monitored for 20 days and if there are any further unauthorised absences a School Attendance Panel will be held. At the end of the meeting the parents/carers may have been issued with a Fixed Penalty Warning Notice. The child’s attendance is then monitored again for a short period. If during that period of monitoring there are further unauthorised absences the case will be referred into Leeds City Council’s 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 – Appendix 2).

Re-integration

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 or Senior Leader in liaison with the class teacher, child and parents/carers.

7. PROMOTING ATTENDANCE AND REWARDS

The importance of good attendance is regularly promoted during lessons and assemblies. a variety of rewards are 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 achieves 97% (collectively) they receive 15 minutes extra playtime.

Individually:

Each Term, attendance will be calculated and re-set at the beginning of the term – children with 97% attendance will be rewarded in assembly with a certificate and an 'excellent attendance badge', which they will be able to wear on their jumper.



COMMUNICATIONS

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring their child attends school every day and punctually. We have in place a Home School Agreement.

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.

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

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

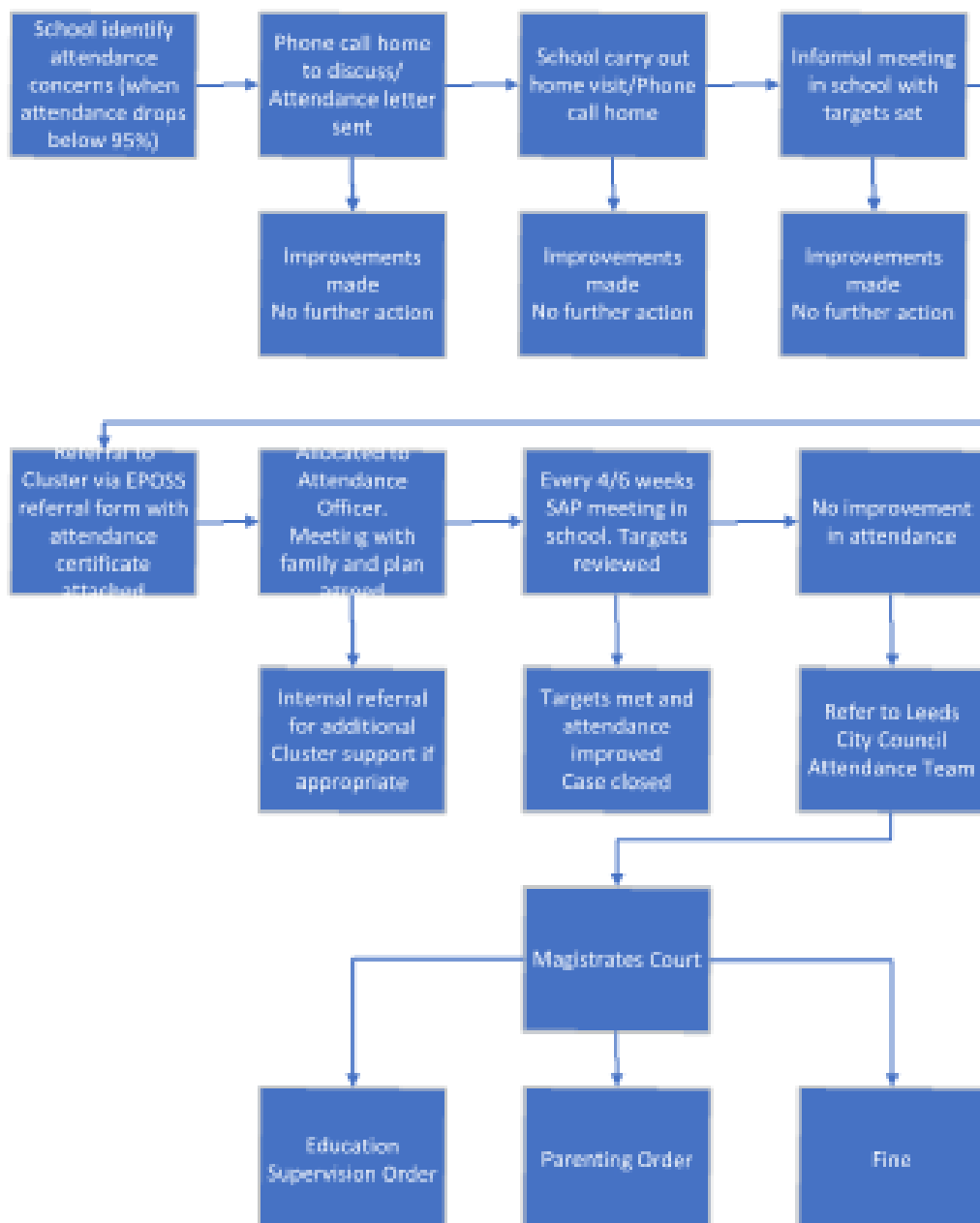
8. CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

If parents/carers are dissatisfied with any aspect of the schools handling of attendance issues they should raise their concerns in accordance with the Federation's Complaints Policy which can be found on the school websites.

APPENDIX 1



EPOSS Attendance Pathway



APPENDIX 2

