

Brookside Primary School

Ellesmere Port, Cheshire



Attendance Policy

November 2022

Approved by Governors: November 2022



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Attendance Policy

At Brookside Primary School, we believe and know that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. Good attendance (including arriving and leaving school on time) is essential for them to gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases. It is equally important that children should not be in school if they are unwell.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents/carers, local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure that Parents are fully aware of the school's Attendance Policy.
- To ensure that children are made aware of the value of regular attendance.
- To create a culture in which good attendance is the norm.
- To promote regular attendance and punctuality by being vigilant and maintaining the school internal absence record.
- To ensure that a child's early learning is not jeopardised by poor attendance.

Procedure

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school. Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

Authorised – An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell. Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised – An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school, and therefore the absence is not approved. Persistent unauthorised absences can lead to a fixed penalty notice.

If a child is going to be absent, parents/carers are expected to contact school each morning to provide the reason. This can be done via telephone or via 'Absence reporting' on our school website. This should be done preferably before 9am, so that the reason can then be recorded on the class register and the teacher is informed.

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence on the register with an 'N' code. If there has been no contact from parents/carers, the Pastoral Manager will contact them on the initial day and every day thereafter until contact is made. If no contact is made this absence will be left unauthorised.

Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons:

They provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance.

Punctuality

Parents are advised that school begins at 8.55am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time.

Late arrival after 09.00am Pupils receive a 'L' code. Pupils MUST be taken to the Main Office to be signed in late. This is so we can mark them as present in the building.

Registration closes at 09.30am after this time pupils receive a 'U' code meaning the lateness is unauthorised.

These late procedures are in place so that every child is entered onto the register and can be accounted for in the event of an emergency. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action may be taken.

Young Carers

School will be flexible with late attendance where a young carer is concerned and school will make every effort to ensure the root cause of lateness is apparent and appropriate support is given.

Schools procedure for concerning attendance

If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent, the parents/carers will be contacted by letter raising our concerns.

Following the initial letter, there will be a period of monitoring the child's attendance (maximum of four weeks).

If there is no improvement, at this point, parents/carers may be invited in for a meeting with the Head Teacher and/ or Pastoral Manager.

If the situation does not improve, school may send a letter advising that any further absences will not be authorised without Medical Evidence.

Proof of prescribed medicines or letter/medical cards from hospital/doctor regarding appointments are classed as medical evidence.

A referral to the Education Welfare Service may be made and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued for unauthorised absences.

Leave of Absence during term time

Parents/carers are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents/carers do not have the right to take their child(ren) out of school for such a holiday.

The new legislation received from the authorities following the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Isle of Wright v Platt* in April 2017 is that

“There are sound policy reasons for not allowing term time holidays. Any requests made for holidays to be taken in the new academic year September 2017 or thereafter irrespective of when the request was made which is not considered to be exceptional in circumstances will be recorded as unauthorised, and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued”.

Any requests for leave of absence should be submitted in advance, on the correct form, available from the school office (see attached form at end of this document). **NO LEAVE SHOULD BE BOOKED BEFORE SUBMITTING THE FORM AND SPEAKING TO THE HEAD TEACHER.**

In considering whether or not to authorise leave of absence, the school will consider each case individually, taking into account a child's overall attendance and the reason for the absence. The school will not authorise any leave taken during SATS Weeks.

Do not let your child have time off school unless it is really necessary and **do promote the importance of good attendance**. Please only keep them at home if it is necessary.

Try to make appointments outside school time. If this is not possible, please try to ensure the child's teacher is informed the day before and where possible provide appointment letter/card prior to the appointment.

If you are worried about your child's attendance, what can you do?

- Talk to your child.
- Talk to the Head Teacher, Pastoral Manager or any staff at school.
- Talk to the Education Welfare Service.

The school aims to have ALL children attending regularly and punctually and parents/carers need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Parents/carers need to be aware that Cheshire West and Chester Schools are operating the Fast Track Prosecution System in co-operation with the Education Welfare Service.

Parents/carers need to be aware that Cheshire West and Chester Council in conjunction with Schools are operating Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance.

In developing this Attendance Policy, we have taken into account the fact that Cheshire West and Chester is an ethnically diverse community. The school has incorporated practice, which guards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. Improving the performance of underachieving pupils is a key priority in the Education Development Plan. This aims to improve the attainment of minority pupils across the County.

The school understands the need for on-going communication with parents/carers and pupils regarding this Policy, particularly those new to the school.

Reward Systems

Here at Brookside, we support and encourage children to maintain good attendance at school. We have several reward systems in place:

- **Weekly attendance** – Every Monday morning there is a whole school assembly. The class attendance for the previous week is calculated and the class with the highest attendance gains the Attendance trophy for the week along with 10 minutes extra play time.
- **Half termly class award** – Every half term, the weekly attendance figures are added together and the average is taken and the class with the highest percentage receives a treat.
- **End of Term class award** – The class with the best attendance over the term receives a treat.
- **End of Year class award** – The class with the best attendance for the year receives a treat.

Children Missing In Education

As a result of daily admissions registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of school staff becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they should try to establish with the parents/ carers, what has happened.

If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the designated safeguarding lead should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability by making reasonable enquiries, and, where appropriate, refer any concerns about the child to Children's Social Care.

School monitors attendance closely and addresses poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

In line with Local Authority guidance, in the more general circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, and there are no immediate safeguarding concerns, the Headteacher should inform the Pupil Tracking Officer and Education Welfare Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation.

All schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and this includes investigating any unexplained absences.

All schools are required to notify the local authority within 5 days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

Schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the regulations, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school and the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. They should also record that they have completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care (and the Police if appropriate).

https://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/cheshire_west/p_ch_missing_educ.html?zoom_highlight=missing

Updated January 2023

To be reviewed November 2022

**APPLICATION FOR A PUPIL TO BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM
TIME FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.**

SCHOOL NAME:

PUPIL NAME: CLASS:

DATES: FROM: TO:

Please state the exceptional circumstance:

Please give the names of any brothers/sisters who are also affected:

Name:	D.O.B.	School:	Has school been Informed? (Y/N)

(To be completed by School) Date form submitted: _____

Current attendance: % Last year's attendance: %

Any previous requests? Yes / No details:

Request granted: YES / NO

Fixed penalty notice requested: YES / NO

Signed: _____

Date: _____