

# **ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

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Beccles Primary Academy

Agreed by Governors: March 2018

Next review: March 2019

Signed:

Beccles Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually, will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular (good)

attendance at Beccles Primary Academy is 96% or better.

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Approx. days lost per year</b>	<b>Approx. weeks lost per year</b>
100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
97-99.9%	Good	5-9	1-2
95-96.9%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-94.9%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance; parents, pupils and all school staff. The school acknowledges the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. The Act states, "If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence". A "parent" is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of that child.

We ask parents to work with us to ensure good attendance by:

- ensuring your child arrives on time every day;
- promoting a good attitude to learning by ensuring your child attends school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons;
- notifying the school as soon as possible on the first day of an absence (by phone or in person) and then contacting the school on each subsequent day of absence;
- providing reasons for the absence (if insufficient information is given the absence may be unauthorised);
- providing medical information/evidence when requested;
- returning your child to school as soon as possible following an illness;
- making medical/dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible;
- not taking holidays during term time.

If a child is feeling unwell due to a headache, cold or stomach ache they should be encouraged to attend school; the school will contact parents if their condition worsens and they need to go home.

If a child is absent from school for a prolonged period of time, or has a recurrent medical problem, parents should send supporting documentation to the school office; this will be photocopied and returned to the parent.

If a child's attendance is below 96%, absences will only be authorised if supported by medical or other relevant evidence.

### **Pupil responsibilities**

We expect that where possible all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Tell their class teacher or the school office of any problem that may hinder them from attending school.

## **School responsibilities**

All staff at Beccles Primary Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The Headteacher will oversee the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance & Punctuality Policy is consistently applied throughout the school and that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team. This is also made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents and included in the report prepared for the Governing Body.

The school is responsible for ensuring that children have good attendance by:

- Providing a welcoming and safe environment, this encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Providing a curriculum that is engaging and meets the needs of all learners.
- Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately, using all necessary register codes.
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter from a parent does not authorise an absence, only the school can decide if the reason justifies authorising the absence).
- Contacting parents when there is concern about a child's absence either by phone or letter.
- Phoning parents on the first day of absence if a reason for absence has not been received.
- Working with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- Consulting with the Education Welfare Service with concerns around pupil's attendance or possible missing child.
- Making a referral to the Education Welfare Service where necessary and adopting the Penalty Notice Protocol.
- Acknowledging and rewarding good attendance of pupils and/or classes (e.g. assemblies, certificates or prizes).
- Giving pupil attendance updates through parent interviews and through whole-school newsletters.
- Issuing termly letters to parents advising them of their child's attendance to date with subsequent rating based on the attendance percentage.
- Pupil's attendance rates will be included in the annual reports sent to parents.
- Continuing to undertake regular attendance audits.

## **Governing Body Responsibilities**

Governors recognise the importance of attendance in learning, attainment and raising aspirations. Mrs Tracy Driscoll is the Attendance Link Governor.

The Attendance Link Governor is responsible for:

- ensuring the school is regularly monitoring attendance;
- meeting with the school attendance lead to review attendance data and plans for improving attendance e.g. rewards for good attendance;
- reviewing the level of persistent absenteeism (where attendance is 90% or less) and the actions being taken to address it;
- reporting to the Governing Body termly on attendance matters.

## **School times and registration**

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and

once after lunchtime.

All pupils (Reception to Year 6) should arrive at school in time for the bell at 8.50am. On hearing the bell at 8.50am pupils should enter the school building at the designated entrances and make their way to class. Morning register is taken at 8.55am and the register remains open for 10 minutes. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 9.05am will be marked as present but late.

The afternoon register is taken after lunchtime and will remain open for 5 minutes from the start of the session. Pupils arriving after the afternoon register has been taken but before it has closed will be marked as present but late.

Lunchtimes are staggered as follows:

- Reception 11.45am to 12.45pm
- Years 1 & 2 12:00am to 12.45pm
- Years 3,4,5 & 6 12.15pm to 1.00pm

Pupils arriving late should report to the school office on arrival and the adult bringing them to school will be expected to give a reason for the lateness.

Pupils arriving after the registers have closed, either in the morning or the afternoon, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the whole of the session.

Being frequently late for school means lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

19 days lost a year through being late = 90% attendance = Persistent Absence.

## **Strategies to support improving punctuality**

### **Night time routines**

- Encourage children to pack their school bag before going to bed, ready for the next day.
- Getting to bed earlier.
- Setting a time for a television, iPad, computer, mobile phone and other devices to be turned off.

### **Morning routines**

- Setting the alarm for a time that allows all morning routines to be carried out without making them late for school.
- Having breakfast before leaving home, so there is no need to call in at the shop on the way to school.
- Encourage them to leave home at least five minutes earlier than they think they needs to.
- Meeting a reliable friend to walk to school with.
- Coming to school for breakfast club if available.

### **Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school. Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised until the school is satisfied that I should be authorised. **Parents cannot authorise absences and should be aware that while calling the school or providing a note for an**

***absence complies with safeguarding procedures, it does not automatically mean an absence will be authorised.***

The school may authorise absence in the following circumstances:

1. Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend. Medical verification should be sought wherever possible; this may include a doctor's appointment card, prescription, or photograph of any medication prescribed. If a child's attendance is below 96%, absences will *only* be authorised if supported by medical or other relevant evidence.
2. Where the pupil has a medical appointment. Parents are encouraged to make these outside of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards, or send them beforehand. Verification of appointments must be provided upon return to school.
3. Where the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parent belongs.
4. Where there are exceptional family circumstances that may necessitate term time absence e.g. bereavement, funeral or terminal illness, but there must be a discussion with the Headteacher regarding necessity of length of absence and a Request for Absence form will need to be completed.

***Leave of absence will not be authorised within term time*** except in exceptional circumstances. The following reasons may be considered exceptional:

- Parents are in the armed forces returning from overseas placements.
- Wedding of an immediate family member; evidence to be provided and a maximum of one day granted.

If you wish to request term time leave, you will need to complete a Request for Absence form which are available from the school office. This should be submitted 4 weeks prior to the absence and include the appropriate evidence. The Headteacher will then make a decision as to whether or not the leave can be authorised and will only do so if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time. Parents will be notified of the Headteacher's decision by letter.

### **Religious observance**

Beccles Primary Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parents will be aware of these dates and should complete a Request for Absence form.

### **Unauthorised absences**

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping, birthdays
- Looking after other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Trips in term time that have not been agreed
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark
- Truancy
- Haircut
- To get new shoes or uniform

### **Persistent Absence**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents immediately.

### **Penalty Notices**

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring their children receive a full-time and efficient education, and the Local Authority have a duty to enforce this where necessary. Local Authorities are authorised to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. Penalty Notices are intended to be early deterrents to patterns of unauthorised absence.

Beccles Primary Academy will, using the criteria set out in this policy, make a Penalty Notice Referral to the Local Authority if a child's attendance is below 96%, with six or more sessions of unauthorised absence (each day is made up of two sessions) within the academic year. The Local Authority (Suffolk County Council) will then issue a Penalty Notice fine per parent per child. A "parent" is defined as someone who has parental responsibility for a child or who has the care of that child.

Parents should note that fines increase if they are not paid within the specified time. If Penalty Notices are not paid in full within 28 days of issue, the County Council will start legal proceedings against parents in the Magistrate's Court for the original offence of failing to ensure their child attends school regularly.

Further information on Suffolk County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct can be found on their website ([www.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk)) or on the school's website (under Our School, Attendance & Admissions) or call 0345 606 6172.

Beccles Primary Academy does not benefit in any way from Penalty Notices.

If the school still has concerns over a child's attendance after a Penalty Notice has been issued, the school will contact parents for a meeting with a member of the Senior Team.

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

The school will consider referrals to the Local Authority for legal actions to be taken if there are no improvements in the overall attendance.

## **Managing and improving attendance**

### **First-day calling**

Parents are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence and then for each subsequent day of absence. Where this does not happen, they will be contacted on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the emergency contact numbers will be called. In the event of no contact being made, a letter will be sent to the parents and consideration taken in making a safeguarding referral as the school cannot establish the child's whereabouts.

### **Meeting with parents**

Where there is an emerging pattern of a pupil's absence, or if staff are particularly concerned, the school will contact the parents to arrange a meeting to discuss reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in

place with the parents and pupil to offer the necessary support to resolve any difficulties and to improve attendance.

### **Profile & Rewards**

Attendance has a very high profile at Beccles Primary Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its link to attainment. Parents will also receive a termly letter advising them of their child's attendance to date, with subsequent rating based on the attendance percentage.

The school will employ a number of strategies to reward classes and individuals for excellent attendance e.g. a certificate may be awarded each week to the class with the best attendance. In these situations the school is very aware that some children, due to long term medical conditions, may never be able to achieve a high rate of attendance. This is taken into account when considering rewards for attendance so that classes/individuals do not feel disadvantaged in these circumstances.

At the end of each half term, children who have 100% attendance will join the 100 Club.

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring that children obtain the best possible outcomes in all aspects of school life. Good attendance supports children's emotional and social health and development. Good attendance is the best way to safeguard children, it builds confidence and gives children a sense of belonging which ultimately teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the wellbeing of others.