



Benington C of E Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Written	Reviewed	Next Review Date	Author	Adopted by Governors	Sub-Policies
Sept 2004	June 2019	June 2020	Mrs Swann	May 2016	None

Aims of this Policy

Benington Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will work consistently towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School staff and governors lay a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day but it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching.

School Attendance and the Law

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws which is contained in –

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised, (see below).

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Benington School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils who do experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their class teacher, and if the need should arise, from the headteacher.

Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and

equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents/carers are requested to notify the school as soon as possible by phone call or message from another responsible adult, and send a note confirming absence on return.

A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent/carer.

If the school receives no explanation for absence or lateness by 9.10 am, a telephone call will be made by the school office. This will be repeated four times during the morning. If no contact is made the head or deputy head will go to the registered address. If no one is at home, a call will be made to police 101 callout.

If your child is going to be off due to the 48 hour rule, you only need to phone on day one. If your child has an illness, such as tonsillitis, where the recovery time is unknown, it is expected that parents will phone on the first day of absence and then the third day to update the office.

Parents will be promptly informed of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance or punctuality. Parents, whenever possible, should try to avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Parents whose first language is not English or have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school will employ a range of strategies (see below) to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently.

Registration

Classes open at 8:45 am and registers will be called promptly at 8.55 am and at 1.00 pm and will be marked in accordance with the list of symbols from SIMS.

Registers will close at 9.00 am and at 1.05 pm. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, he/she will be marked as 'late'. Pupils who arrive after the registers have closed should report to the office where they will be marked as 'late' for 10 minutes after the registers close, and "unauthorised" after this. This marking will affect the school's overall attendance figures. If a pupil is persistently late, the Headteacher will contact the parents.

Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in school after the registers have closed and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the pupil has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the head of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the head considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child. The School will be following Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice Procedures.

The Fixed Penalty Notice rate per parent per child is currently £60 if paid within 21 days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. There is no right of appeal against the issue of a Penalty Notice.

No parent will receive more than two separate notices per twelve month period, but there is no restriction on the number of formal warnings which may be given.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may result in the school making an application to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice under the Code of Conduct issued by Hertfordshire County Council (details of which can be obtained from the school or on the school's website).

The Fixed Penalty Notice rate is currently £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days and rising to £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

There is no right of appeal against the issue of a Penalty Notice.

A maximum of two separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any

twelve month period, but there is no restriction on the number of formal warnings which may be given.

Benington Primary School will decide on how an absence is to be recorded according to 'School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence' (DFE 1994). This states that:

Absence can be authorised if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or head of the school')
- the pupil was ill or attending a medical appointment or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home, and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for any of the following:
 - the child's transport to and from school
 - enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home.
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in Annexe A/Circular 10/99 – Pupil Inclusion, are met
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending an interview in connection with an application for a place at another school
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- the pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion (e.g., if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling).

Absence should be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming

- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances)
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return

Holidays

Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time. **Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays and the school has no authority to grant such leave except in exceptional circumstances.**

All notifications for leave for a holiday have to be given in writing to the Headteacher. The Governors and Head will not authorise these.

Procedures for Following Up Absence

- If a pupil is absent and no explanation has been given, the office staff will ring the parents to ascertain the reason for absence.
- If a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and fails to bring a note, or if the explanation offered by a note is unsatisfactory, the school will contact the parents.
- If a pupil is persistently absent or late and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Attendance Officer.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Benington School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.
- Good attendance and punctuality will be openly acknowledged by the school and incentives will be in place to encourage pupils to achieve this.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause of concern will be set targets for improvement. The headteacher will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be regularly reminded (via home/school agreement, newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc.) of the importance of good attendance.

- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually - tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies - Educational Psychology Service, Social Services, Child and Family Guidance, etc. - when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Headteacher will have regular meetings with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Headteacher will make regular reports to the school's governing body on attendance matters.