

Broadwood Primary School



ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Our school target is 97%

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Attendance:

Head teacher	Deputy Head	Attendance lead	Link Governor
Wendy Mitcheson	Susan Brooks-Tyreman	Joanne Jamieson	Tracey Caffrey

Last reviewed	September 2021
Reviewed by	Full Governing Body
Next review date	September 2024

Introduction

At Broadwood Primary school, we recognise excellent punctuality and attendance are extremely important for our children. We believe it is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. Being in school daily enables them to develop in confidence, make positive friendships and achieve the best possible outcomes in progress and attainment. We expect all children on roll to attend school every day as long as they are healthy and well enough to do so. Children will then be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law.

This policy applies to all children registered at our school and is available either on the school website or at our school office. It has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Governors work together and with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all children are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. They begin to develop gaps in their learning which impacts on their progress and attainment. This can then impact negatively on their confidence and behaviours in school. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

We aim to:

- Improve children's achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.

Our objectives:

- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness to parents, carers and children of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with children, parents, staff and the Attendance Service so that all children realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Recognise the role of class teachers as they will be able to identify where attendance is having an impact on attainment.

We promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and children.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality, appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, children, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting children who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to adhere to the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes and attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and children.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual children's attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Attendance Service or appropriate agencies any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the nominated person with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Reporting concerns around children's absence from school to the Family Support Worker/Attendance Lead and Headteacher.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with requests for an explanation which should then be recorded.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring local authority policy and procedures for children absent from school are followed.
- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Recognising and acting on trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the Attendance Service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Attendance Lead.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Reporting concerns around children absent from school to the Headteacher.
- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring the Attendance and Lateness are completed daily.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early.
- First Day Response: Contacting home if no reason for absence is received (phone call or text message).

Attendance Lead Responsibilities:

Our Family Support Worker/Attendance Lead is a key person to offer additional support to Parents / carers and children.

This includes support in relation to:

- Reporting concerns around children absent from school to the Headteacher.
- Improving school attendance by carrying out home visits, attending meeting with the parent / carer.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Identify with parents the reason for poor attendance and work with parents to achieve improved attendance and reduce exclusions.
- Monitor attendance levels & punctuality.
- Offer parent contracts and attendance plans.
- Identify patterns of absence.
- Talk to children on a 1:1 basis regarding attendance related matters.
- Offer group work sessions to remove the barriers to attendance including friendship groups.
- Refer to outside agencies for additional support for families including School Health, CYPS, Attendance Service, Police, Youth Offending Team & Social Care.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head teacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.
- First Day Response: Contacting home if no reason for absence is received (phone call or text message).
- Delivering an 8-week intensive attendance support intervention.

If necessary, we will seek external support if we have significant concerns relating to attendance.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not usually authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Authorised absence

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 carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do **not** have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Registers

1. Registers are legal documents and will be marked twice a day
2. Parents must always give reasons for absence to the school.
3. Schools are to determine whether absence is authorised or unauthorised in exceptional circumstances, considering factors such as frequency, duration, attendance patterns, i.e. within reason. Staff must be observant of situations where absence is continually condoned by parents.

Registration

All the school doors open at 8.45 am until 8.55 am. This time is sufficient for all children to come into their classroom.

We provide a free Breakfast club which opens to children and their families at 8.00am, children will be supervised by school staff.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.05 am and by 12.50pm.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority.

Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly for the purpose of 1996 Education Act. The school seeks to improve general punctuality and to improve attitude of persistent offenders by: -

- a. Informing parents of our expectations and offer ways of helping combat lateness.

- b. Parents of persistent late attenders must be contacted, and reported to the Attendance Officer if no improvement.
- c. Praise and acknowledge latecomers who improve.
- d. All children and parents must understand that lateness is actively discouraged, although sensitivity may be appropriate in some cases.
- e. Schools may use other incentives to improve levels of punctuality.
- f. The FSW will be used to support pupils and families with any of the above issues.

Once the doors are closed at 8.55am children must enter through the school office. Any child who comes into school after 8.55am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those children who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each child (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who are persistently late miss a huge amount of learning, this is the part of the day where the teacher input is strong and therefore very significant to a child's learning. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns, and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence providing school with full and accurate details of the reason for the child's absence and expected date of return. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised

Where we have not received a reason for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. The Family Support Worker will check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will attempt to contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services (Bridges Hospital Teaching – Newcastle LA only) to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card/letter or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission a parent /carer for the school to make their own enquiries. Alternatively, we may make a referral to the School Health Advisor to offer support.

If a child displays Covid 19 related symptoms, they will remain at home until a PCR test has been carried out. If the result is negative, they can return to school if feeling well. Remote Education will be offered to the child.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of Headteachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, Head teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. Parents are encouraged to keep open lines of communication with school over absence as persistent absence can be considered a safeguarding matter.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 97% for individual pupils unless there are complex medical circumstances.

Robust actions are in place to address any concerns relating to attendance.

Promote and Celebrate 'good attendance' regularly through a whole school approach.
Monitor attendance daily and quickly identify trends of absences or any other concerns.
Family Support Worker/Attendance lead to communicate with families to rectify any concerns and offer support. For example, if a lone parent has to isolate, we will offer transport.
If we are unable to communicate with families, a visit will be made to the home address if we feel this will be beneficial for the child.
Intervention from Headteacher either with a telephone call, home visit or meeting.
An 8-week intervention will be offered to families to improve attendance (led by the family support worker/attendance lead). A parent contract will be offered at this stage.
Regular meetings will be held between the family support worker and Headteacher.
Local Authority Attendance Service will be notified if we do not see positive impact as a result of school actions, which may result in a Penalty Notice.
The LA Attendance Service working jointly with Legal Services may also consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying for a parenting order. • Applying for an education supervision order. • School Attendance Order (If parent has not registered their child in a school). • Community Order. The LA Attendance Service can remotely check and monitor attendance levels. The LA Attendance Service regularly carries out register checks to identify children with low attendance.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Head teacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

Rewards & Recognition

Although good attendance is an expectation the school seeks to improve whole school attendance by offering incentives, this may include:

- Daily Certificates for every class with 100% attendance for the day.
- Weekly celebration for the class with the best attendance. Class teacher provides a reward for the children e.g. extra playtime.
- Half termly trip to the prize shop for the class who have had the most weekly rewards during that term.
- Half termly reward afternoon for every child who has had at least 98% attendance during the half term: craft activity, dance session, sporting activity or movie afternoon.

- Termly certificates for 96+% or 100% attendance.
- Termly draw from all of the fortnightly tickets gained during the term. Rewards of the following nature: pedal bike, vouchers, family day trips or electronic gadgets.
- Individual incentives offered to families who work together with staff to improve attendance.
- Termly reward (trip out) for class received most weekly rewards during that term
- Prizes offered to individuals for improved attendance, particularly children with low attendance.
- Prize shop visits/extra play/extra golden time/Broadie time for all classes above 96% for the week.

Parenting Contracts for attendance – guide for parents

What is a parenting contract?

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent or carer and either the school and / or the local authority. A parenting contract may be offered if your child has failed to attend school regularly.

A parenting contract is meant to support you, the school and the LA to identify and address the issues surrounding your child's irregular attendance at school and encourage a positive working relationship to improve attendance. It is not intended to be a punishment.

What does it involve?

Everyone signed up to the contract will agree to take certain actions which are realistic and which address the issues of non-attendance for a specified period of time. You might agree to do things like getting your child up on time, signing a daily report card and reporting any difficulties to school as soon as possible. School might agree to inform you if your child does not arrive at school, deal quickly with any problems and involve other agencies that might be able to offer you additional support. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

Do I have to enter into a parenting contract?

Entry into a parenting contract is voluntary but it does provide you with an opportunity to get support to improve your child's attendance at school. If you do take up the offer of a parenting contract and try to comply with it, this may assist your case if the local authority decides to take legal action against you for your child's irregular attendance. If you refuse the offer or don't comply without good reason this may also be presented as evidence.

If you decide not to enter into a contract, you will need to try to find other ways of improving your child's attendance and it may be worth discussing how you intend to do this with the school or local authority.

How is a parenting contract arranged?

You will be invited to a meeting in school with a school representative. The local authority Area Attendance Officer may also attend. Depending on their age and understanding, your child can attend part or all of the meeting.

At the meeting you will be asked your views on your child's attendance and whether there are any underlying issues. Try to think about the reasons behind your child's absences, any particular difficulties you are experiencing at the moment and what would help you to improve your child's attendance. Also think about what you can do to improve attendance.

School will explain what support they can offer and whether any other agency including the local authority might also be able to help you and your child. You will be able to discuss

what is expected of both you and the school and then agree the actions that will support improved attendance. If you choose to accept the offer, the final contract will be signed by you, the school representative and in some cases the area attendance officer.

National contacts

www.direct.gov.uk School attendance, absence and your child

www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport Behaviour and attendance - Parental responsibility

familylives.org.uk Truancy Helpline: 0808 800 2222

Local contacts

www.newcastle.gov.uk Schools – Attendance

You can phone the Attendance Service on 0191 277 4500 or

Email attendanceservice@newcastle.gov.uk

If you require this information in audio, Braille or large print, please contact the Attendance Service to arrange.

Broadwood Primary Attendance Process

School Response

Local Authority Response

