

# Belton C of E Primary School



## Attendance Policy

Date	June 2019
Review Date	June 2022

## Introduction

***“The School and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child’s education and development. It is for this reason that non-attendances (however short or infrequent) are treated seriously. It remains the policy of the school to only sanction non-attendance during term time in exceptional circumstances.*”**

We expect pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We will reward those pupils whose attendance is very good through half termly attendance certificates. For clarification, our definition of good attendance is in excess of 96%+, very good attendance is 100%. We will also make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school, for example medical needs or hospitalisation.

Pupils who attend school on a regular basis can take advantage of the full array of educational opportunities available to them. Research shows that those pupils who have irregular attendance are at risk of not achieving their full potential and in extreme cases, may be drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour.

It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that the school has all current contact details and a home or mobile telephone number must be provided.

### **1. School Responsibility – THE LAW and School Attendance**

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated each regulation applies to all schools in England.
- School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.

- The Head teacher and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance.
- Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.
- Attendance is recorded and data stores and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.
- It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.

## **2. Registration**

Registration at Belton C E Primary School is as follows:

It is an expectation that pupils assemble on the playground in time for the doors to open at 8:45 am.

We call the register twice a day - once at the start of the morning session (8:55am) and once at the start of the afternoon session (1:00pm).

The registers should be taken and returned to the office within a 10minute window. (9am-9.10am / 1:00-1:10).

Officially, in the morning, the registers are 'open' for a further 30 minutes (8.55am-9.25am). Children arriving within this time, but after their name is called, will be recorded as late (coded L) before registration closes.

Registers will 'close' after 30 minutes (9.25am). Children arriving after this time will be recorded as late after registration closes which is an unauthorised absence (coded U) unless there is an acceptable reason for the lateness.

## **3. Definitions**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either

**AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

#### **Authorised Absence – code as 'M', 'I', 'C', 'T', 'B', 'R'**

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Parents do not authorise any absences and only the school can decide to authorise absences.

The school will code an absence as authorised if the parents/carers provide medical evidence to justify their child's absence. School will expect parents to provide medical evidence for any absences over 3 days.

The school may make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer (EWO) Naina Zavery, if a pupil has an increasing number of authorised absences as this is classed as 'persistent absence'. Contact will be made with the parents regarding the absences. Once referred to the EWO parents may be required to provide medical evidence for all absences even if it's a single day at a time.

The school may also make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer if there is a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety. Parents will be contacted to ascertain if further action needs to be taken.

Parents are expected to co-operate with the school and attend any meeting when requested to do so by the school.

#### **Unauthorised Absence – coded as 'O' or 'G'**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the Head teacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

All absences are coded as unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent. Examples of this are

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Parents keeping pupils off school because they themselves are ill
- Family holidays or leave of absence that has not been agreed

An absence will also be coded unauthorised if a parent fails to provide medical evidence when requested to do so.

#### **4. Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent/carer of any pupil who has unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will be asked to a meeting at the school to discuss the problem.

If the pupil continues to accrue unauthorised absences the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, Naina Zavery, who will make contact with the parents to arrange a meeting and seek to ensure that the parents/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

Where required, legal action will be sought and the EWO will submit the case before the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice and / or prosecution. The Education Act 1996 (Section 444) states:

'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence'. The school reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parent/carer who repeatedly fails in their responsibility to send their child to school on a regular basis.

#### **5. If a pupil is absent**

Parents and carers should inform the school as soon as possible in the morning of the first day of absence either by telephone on 01530 222304 or leave a message, clearly stating the reason for the absence and the expected duration of illness.

When a pupil is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which will inform the school office. If the office has not already been informed of the reason for pupil's absence, they will endeavour to contact a parent or carer by telephone or txt message to ascertain the reason for the pupil's non-attendance.

When the pupil returns to school, parents or carers must ensure that a note or verbal confirmation is provided to explain the reason for the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a pupil has a medical appointment. Parents are encouraged to provide the appointment card/letter.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a pupil, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the pupil.

Where the school has concerns about a pupil's safety the EWO will be contacted and a 'Safe and Well' check will be carried out.

When a pupil is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the pupil.

## **6. Requests for leave of absence**

**The school and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child's education and development. It is for this reason that non-attendances (however short or infrequent) are taken seriously. It remains the policy of the school only to sanction non-attendance during term time in exceptional circumstances.**

We expect parents and carers to contact the school and request the leave of absence in writing stating the reason for the request. The head teacher will respond to the request as soon as possible.

## **7. Holidays in term time**

New government guidelines, which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, prevent Head teachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during term time

does not fall under the category of 'exceptional circumstances' and the school is therefore unable to grant leave of absence for any family holiday. Should a parent feel there is an exceptional circumstance for requesting leave in term time they should put their request stating the reason in writing to the Head Teacher who will then discuss the matter with the Chair of Governors and the EWO before making a decision. The parent will then be informed of the decision.

#### **8. Issuing a fine**

**If your child has unauthorised leave of absence you may either be issued with a Penalty Notice of £120 per parent per child (discounted to £60 if paid within 21 days), or, your case could be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates Court for the purposes of a criminal prosecution.**

Parents can seek further clarification from the EWO on 07947994289 or email [nainazavery@ews-m.com](mailto:nainazavery@ews-m.com)

#### **9. Long term absence**

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. This work must be completed and returned to school so that the school can monitor the pupil's progress.

Where it is deemed that a pupil is unable to return to school due to chronic medical or other medical reasons the school will make a referral to Naina Zavery to ascertain if any alternative provision for education can be requested. Parents will have to provide medical evidence that clearly states a pupil is unable to return to mainstream education.

Parents must provide the school with medical evidence when their child is going to be off from school for long periods but alternative provision is not being sought. The school may refer this for further investigations to Naina Zavery who will make contact with the parent for further clarification.

