

Broomhill First School Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Broomhill First School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure our pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the headteacher and governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are 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. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

Aims

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents/carers of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Develop and implement procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Support families and pupils who are experiencing any difficulties which are affecting attendance and/or punctuality.

Definitions

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. 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.

Procedures

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

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils.
- 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 pupils attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.

Responsibilities

Class teachers are responsible for:

- 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.
- Informing the headteacher where there are concerns.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Ensuring information received from parents/carers regarding an absence are passed on to office staff by the time the registers are returned to the school office after morning registration.
- Discussing attendance issues at parent evenings where necessary.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- 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 Education Welfare Service.

- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Education Welfare Officer.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties, reasons for absence and providing support for the family.
- Reporting to governors with regards to attendance.

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration, attendance and punctuality information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers (or staff) regarding absence.
- Contacting parents/carers 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 headteacher.

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.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically 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.

Registration

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.10am (9.15am in Nursery) in a morning and by 1.05pm in an afternoon.

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

The bell will ring at 8.55am in the main playground to mark the start of the school day. Children will line up in their classes and be accompanied into school by a member of staff. Once the playground doors/gates are closed at 9.00am the only way to get into school is via the main entrance. Any pupil who comes into school this way will need to be accompanied by an adult who must notify school office staff that their child is now in school. The reason for this is to ensure that we have an accurate record of all children on site to comply with safety regulations and also to ensure that any lateness is recorded, closely monitored and followed up, as appropriate.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence by 9.30am and provide us with details of the reason for their 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 to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holidays

Headteachers are only allowed to authorise leave of absence if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. If this is not the case then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.

Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents by the headteacher. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service. The Education Welfare Officer will work with the school and families to improve the situation and other Local Authority services may become involved to ensure that parents understand the seriousness of the situation. Ultimately, legal action may be taken against any parent who repeatedly fails to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.