



Beaudesert Lower School Attendance Policy – 20th February 2017

1. Introduction

We expect all children 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 children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (amended in 2006)* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. Manual registers are kept but the information is then transferred to a computerized system so that up-to-date information is available for analysis.

2. Why is it important to attend school?

If children are to achieve their potential, good attendance and punctuality are critical. The link between attendance and achievement is well documented and figures from the DfE demonstrate this very clearly.

We want all our children to achieve the very best results that they can. Irregular attendance can, however, have a significant impact on pupil achievement. Children with irregular attendance :

- Can lose friendships or become socially isolated
- Are less likely to feel part of the school
- Miss out on extracurricular opportunities
- Get behind with learning or lose the thread of the topics being taught
- Often become de-motivated on return to school
- Are more likely to become involved in Anti-Social Behaviour

3. What is good attendance?

Parents/carers and children often become confused about what good attendance is. The school expectation for attendance is **97%** and above. The following is a useful guide for parents:

100%	Outstanding
97%-99%	Excellent
95%-97%	Good
92%-95%	Advise improvement
90%-92%	Cause for concern
Below 90%	Serious cause for concern

It should be remembered that 90% attendance is equivalent to one day of absence every fortnight. Over an academic year this amounts to four weeks of absence.

We will contact you if we have concerns about the attendance level of your son/daughter. We also reward pupils who attend well and are punctual through our system of achievers assemblies and certificates.

4 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 or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school on the first day of absence 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. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- The absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

5. If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will pass the register to the school office.

If the parent of the absent child has not already contacted the school by phone the Secretary will make first day contact to determine the reason for absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, 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 guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

6. Punctuality

Parents/carers are also responsible for ensuring that their son/daughter arrives at school punctually. Registers are marked at the beginning of each session at 8.45 am and at 1.00 pm. A child is marked late if arriving after registration time. Registers will close 5 minutes after registration. If a child arrives late after 8.50 am the child will receive a late "unauthorised" absence for that morning session

We will contact you if we have concerns about punctuality (3 lates or more in a half term) and ask that you support our procedures and that we work together to improve punctuality.

7. Requests for leave of absence in term time

Government policy does not allow pupils to be taken out of school for holidays during term-time. A two week holiday in term-time means 50 hours of teaching missed and several homeworks too. Pupils often find it difficult to catch up with work missed.

Parents/carers should be aware of the following:

- Amendments to the **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
- Requests for leave of absence will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances. **It is for the Headteacher and Governing Body of each school to decide which constitutes an exceptional circumstance.**
- Any request for leave of absence in term-time must be made, giving at least 2 weeks' notice, by completing the leave of absence form which should be sent to the Headteacher.
- All requests for leave of absence in term time are considered on an individual basis and are at the complete discretion of the Headteacher.

If a leave of absence request is not authorised and the absence is still taken, there is the possibility of being penalised. The Penalty Notice can be up to £60 for each parent/carer and for each child absent from school.

If the parent/carer does not pay the Penalty Notice it may lead to a prosecution (**see attached leaflet for a full guide to the use of Penalty Notices**).

Schools are not obliged to provide work for pupils during leave of absence taken in term time.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will not be granted.

8. Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the parent should keep the school informed of the child's recovery. Consideration will be given as to whether to send material home so that the child 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, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some possible tuition outside school.

9. Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Attendance Team who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. Alternatively the LA may consider entering into a voluntary "Parenting Contract" with parents if their child is truanting.

10. Rewards for good attendance

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance at the end of the academic year will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term.

11. Attendance targets

The LA sets attendance targets each year which are reported to the Governing Body. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

12. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and attendance data will be presented to the Governing Body each term. 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.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus and/or the school website.

The School Secretary will be responsible for monitoring attendance and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, this will be reported to the head-teacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Reviewed 20th February 2017

Local Authority Guidance
A Guide to Non-school Attendance Penalty Notices

Information for Parents (February 2017)

Introduction

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their children regularly attend the school at which they are registered. Parents can help to ensure regular attendance by:

- Encouraging their children to attend school regularly and on time;
- Taking an interest in their children's education and life at school;
- Communicating with their children's school in order to discuss any emerging issues or problems;
- Notifying their children's school on the first day of any absence;
- Not arranging any family holidays during term-time.

Some children, unfortunately, fail to attend school regularly. The Council has a number of legal powers which it can use to address this. Including among these powers is the authority, under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, to issue Penalty Notices (or fixed fines) to parents whose children fail to attend school regularly.

When a Penalty Notice may be issued

In Central Bedfordshire School Attendance Officers are responsible for deciding when a Penalty Notice shall be issued. They will make this decision in consultation with schools and, when appropriate, other agencies, such as the police.

A Penalty Notice may be issued when:

- A pupil is taken out of school during term-time for a holiday which has not been authorised by the school;
- A truancy patrol carried out by the Attendance Officer has found a pupil absence from school and the absence has not been authorised by the school;
- A child's school attendance has been poor and his/her school believe that the issuing of a Penalty Notice may lead to an improvement in the child's attendance (for example, when a child is persistently late for school and his/her parents fail to address the situation).

When a Penalty Notice is issued it is issued on a per child/per parent basis. This means that if a parent/carer have two children and take both children out of school they may be issued with a total of 4 Penalty Notices – one to each parent for each child.

Issuing a Penalty Notice

When issuing a Penalty Notice School Attendance Officers will apply the following criterion:

- When the number of unauthorised absences amounts to at least 10 sessions (5 days) during the previous 12 school weeks.

Before a Penalty Notice is issued parents will usually be issued with a formal warning advising them that unless their child's attendance improves within 15 days a Penalty Notice will be issued. (In some circumstances a Penalty Notice will be issued without a warning having first been given). If the formal warning is in relation to a term-time holiday the warning will remain in force until the child ceases to be a pupil at that school.)

Once a Penalty Notice has been issued, there is no statutory right of appeal, although there are circumstances in which the council may withdraw the Notice.

Payment of Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice is initially for £60. If this £60 is not paid within 21 days from the date of issue it rises to £120. If after 28 days of the date of issue the £120 is not paid the council will prosecute the parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This will lead to an appearance in the magistrates court and may result in a fine of up to £1000.

Contact details

For more information about Penalty Notices or any other issues related to school attendance please contact the Access and Inclusion Service on 0300 300 4953.

Access and Inclusion, Central Bedfordshire Council, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, LU6 1LF

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