



BEAL VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Learning is for Life, Enjoy the Journey!

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Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

Education is a vital part of a child's development and as such the child's right to education should be protected. Beal Vale takes a strong line in this respect and relies on the support of parents to ensure that our attendance statistics are as high as possible.

All pupils have a right to education. A child is of statutory school age between 5 and 16. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. If a child does not, parents/carers may be breaking the law.

Parents should ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. Parents need to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children. This includes making sure that pupils complete homework on time and that their children keep school rules about behaviour.

If the school has concerns about a pupil being absent or do not accept the explanation for an absence as genuine, the headteacher will raise the matter with the Education Welfare Service.

PURPOSE AND AIMS

- To ensure that all children at Beal Vale have access to the full provision of education without unnecessary or avoidable disruption through poor attendance.
- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure that the school attendance aspirations are achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure that every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for data analysis.
- To identify causes of low attendance/ punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.
- To promote good attendance and punctuality.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Schools and local authorities-

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- To ensure every pupil has access to full time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents

- To perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual for their lessons.

This advice summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

These requirements are 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

SCHOOL TARGET

It is important to set realistic targets. These targets may be set in consultation with the Local Authority or with the Governing Body. The school will review its attendance strategy as part of the process.

Target for 2015-2016 = 96.2%

Target for 2014-2015 = 95%

2013-2014 actual = 95.3%

All targets/ results are based on a whole academic year.

During the academic year 2014-2015 persistence absence is defined as attendance below 85%, which means a pupil has to be absent for 56 sessions (28days) of school to be classified as persistently absent.

During the academic year 2015-2016 the government is reducing the persistent absence threshold to 90%.

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE GOOD ATTENDANCE

WEEKLY GOODWORK ASSEMBLIES

On a Friday at Beal Vale Primary School we hold a good-work assembly. Classes with the highest attendance receive our Class Attendance Trophy. The classes are awarded team points towards an end of year award. Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of the schools achievements in attendance and punctuality.

SCHOOL NEWLETTER

Beal Vale newsletter often includes an item to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly reminds parents of the importance of attendance.

BREAKFAST CLUB

The daily breakfast club is provided at a low cost for breakfast items and drinks. The club is supervised by staff members from 08.25am every morning.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

At Beal Vale Primary School we pride ourselves on th quality of teaching and an organised learning environment for our pupils. We believe that this supports and enhances our pupils learning and ensures that children enjoy school and attend regularly. Regular and rigorous environmental audits are carried out across school.

END OF 1/2 TERM ATTENDANCE AWARDS

Pupils are awarded sticker for 100% attendance on a ½ termly basis during Good Work Assembly.

END OF YEAR ATTENDANCE AWARDS

Pupils with 100% attendance for the full year are rewarded at the end of the school year. The reward days is presented during the final assembly of the year.

PARENTS EVENINGS

Parents evenings provide an opportunity for class teachers to praise and recognize excellent attendance or share any attendance concerns.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

Children are expected to attend for every morning and afternoon session of the school year. Punctuality is essential, as a child may miss vital information which the teacher gives out at the beginning of each session. A child will be deemed to be late after the register has closed if they arrive more than 30 minutes later than the start of the session. The school uses the SIMS computer registration procedure.

MORNING REGISTERS

Class registers are completed on the SIMS registers provided by the school office. This system ensures that no children are missed and that the information can be quickly uploaded onto SIMS. Classroom staff hold the responsibility for accurate and timely recording on the register.

Morning registers are taken at 9.00am – 09.10am daily. Once completed they are returned to the school office.

From 09.00am the junior and infant entrance doors are closed. All children arriving after this time will come into school via the main entrance. The office staff will admit the children and record the late marks (L) after 9.10am as admitted.

Children arriving at school after 9.30am will be recorded as late after the registers have closed (U) and signed in the attendance book by a member of the office staff. The office will then begin the first day absence calls.

AFTERNOON REGISTERS

Registers must be submitted by staff straight after lunch before the afternoon lessons commence. This should be by 1.20pm.

ATTENDANCE LETTERS

Attendance statistics are generally generated each half term and parents will be notified if their child's attendance is causing concern. Attendance statistics that are consistently below 95% may result in parents being requested to provide further explanations about their child's attendance. Where children continue to have attendance of less than 90%, then authorisation for sickness will require a medical certificate.

If a pupil falls below 95% attendance the parents will be issued with a letter (Appendix 1). If there is no improvement within the following half term a further letter requesting medical confirmation will be issued (Appendix 2). If the pupil's attendance still shows no improvement the local authority will issue a letter and continue to monitor alongside the school. Continued low attendance may then result in parent attendance review meetings or the issuing of a penalty notice in line with the local authority process.

In cases where the headteacher has concerns about a pupil's absence rate the educational Welfare Officer will be notified of that child's name and attendance. Powers are available to impose fixed penalty fines for unauthorised absence.

PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is monitored on a daily basis. All late marks are entered into the SIMS system. Parents are asked to give a reason for the lateness on arrival. Children that are late after registration has closed are signed into the attendance book. When children are consistent late parents will be contacted. (This may be verbally or in letter format.) We will notify them of how much lost learning the child is missing. If there is no improvement support will be given by the local authority.

ABSENCE PROCEDURE

If a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent/ carer we will proceed as follows:-

- Call the parents/ carers contact numbers to establish reason for absence.

- If no response to initial call we will continue throughout the day. If contact is not made the pupil will be marked as an unauthorised absence.
- If we have still had no contact parents on the 1st day of absence will endeavor to speak face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers if applicable.
- If child is absent for another day, school will re-try parents contact numbers. If no contact established emergency contact numbers will be called.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents will be asked to provide medical evidence to support appointment.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

From 01st September 2013 Legislation states that parents have no entitlement to take their child on holiday in term time. Holidays cannot be authorised by the school. Term time absence can be granted only in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional Circumstances are defined as:-

- Death or other significant trauma of a parent/ sibling or close family member.
- Life threatening or critical illness of parents or sibling of the pupil.
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required).

Any request for absence due to exceptional circumstances should be made in writing with supporting documentation from the relevant persons (professional) eg, health/ employer. Each request will be individually considered by the Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for occurrences that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can often provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

All exceptional circumstance absence requests must be submitted in writing to the head teacher prior to the absence.

PENALTY NOTICES

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Penalty notices may be issued to the parents of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. This amount is currently £60.00. Beal Vale Primary School follows the local authority guidelines. (Appendix 3)

APPENDIX 1

Dear Parent/ Carer

Re: Attendance

I am writing to you with regards to the attendance of XX at school. XXhas achieved an attendance record of X%.

95% attendance is the expected level of attendance for a child at Primary School age. Persistent gaps in a child's education can have a serious impact on their education attainment.

I wish to take this opportunity to inform you that it is a parents' legal responsibility to ensure the regular full-time attendance of their children.

We take our responsibility for your child's development very seriously at Beal Vale Primary School and would like to take this opportunity to offer support and guidance to improving your Childs attendance.

Your child's class teacher is always available to discuss your child's attendance and offer advice alternatively should you wish to discuss this matter with me please contact me on the number above.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX 2

Dear Parent/ Carers

Re: Attendance

I am writing to you with regards to the attendance of XXX at school. XXX has achieved an attendance record of X%.

In the event of future absence due to illness, you will need to provide medical evidence to support these absences in the form of a copy of the original prescription, a doctor's note or the prescribed medication. Unless the school receives this evidence the absences will be classed as unauthorised.

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Your child's class teacher is always available to discuss your child's attendance and offer advice alternatively should you wish to discuss this matter with me please contact me on the number above.

As you may be aware, unauthorised absence can lead to a Penalty Notice (fine) being issued.

Should you have any queries about this letter please contact me on 0161 770 5752 or by email at info@beal-vale.oldham.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school

Information for Parents/Carers

Each parent/carer issued with a Penalty Notice has to pay a Penalty Fine.

What is a Penalty Notice?

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are categorised as unauthorised (the school viewing reasons provided as unacceptable or no explanations received or 'truancy'). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

A Penalty Notice is seen as a simpler sanction to focus parents on their responsibilities and does not require an appearance in Court. Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for the period identified.

How are they issued and who are they issued to?

They are issued by post to your home. No more than one can be issued for each child in any academic year to each parent/carer who holds responsibility. Each parent/carer issued with a Penalty Notice has to pay a Penalty Fine.

When are they used?

Oldham considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs:

- overt truancy;
- pupils identified as truanting during a truancy patrol;
- parentally-condoned absences;
- unauthorised holidays and unauthorised extended absences during term-time;
- persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed (which is categorised as an unauthorised absence);

- an emerging pattern of unauthorised absences; and
- pupils on the 'fast-track to attendance' project who have failed to achieve the required improvement in attendance.

Is a warning given?

A written warning, other than in specific circumstances**, will be sent from the School Attendance Improvement Service when a pupil has, or is likely to have (in the case of an unauthorised holiday or unauthorised extended absence) a minimum of 5 school days lost to unauthorised absence (in the previous 12 weeks) or they have been identified during a Truancy Patrol .

The written warning will indicate the extent of your child's absences and give you 15 school days in which to effect an improvement.

A Penalty Notice can then be issued if there has been little improvement or if your child has been identified truanting during a Truancy Patrol.

** The deliberate taking of a holiday in term-time without/against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not/would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a Notice has been issued, but you can make representation to the address overleaf if you believe the Notice contains factually inaccurate information and been wrongly issued.

What are the costs & how do I pay?

Payment within 21 days of receiving a Notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this within 28 days. Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with Penalty Notices.

What happens if I don't pay?

You have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full, after which the Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child. If the case is proven at court, this can attract a range of fines up to £2,500 and/or a Custodial Sentence, Parenting Order or Community Sentence depending upon circumstances.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. However it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending on the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies such as the School Attendance Improvement Service.

Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?

Yes, the Local Authority and your child's school will give you advice and support if you need help to secure an improvement in your child's attendance.

It is very important that you speak with the school or with the School Attendance Improvement Service at the earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about securing your child's attendance.

Contact

You can access fact sheets in a number of ways:

Download: <http://www.oldham.gov.uk/learning/school-attendance.htm>

Tel: 0161 770 6620

Fax: 0161 770 3844

Email: sais@oldham.gov.uk

Write to: School Attendance Improvement Service, Centre for Professional Development, Rosary Road, Fitton Hill, Oldham OL8 2QE

Call in: to any council office and request them
