



**Beeston,
Cottingley &
Middleton Cluster**

Working in Partnership to help Children, Young People and Families reach their goals

Attendance Policy – Updated September 2019

BCM Cluster

Pupil attainment, achievement and development depend on regular attendance in school. Encouraging good attendance is the shared responsibility of the schools, pupils, parents and all other educational partners. The aim of the Cluster is to offer a broad, creative and inclusive curriculum and ethos which will encourage school attendance. Through strong values and expectations we will ensure that pupils enjoy coming to school and recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality. For more detailed information for a specific school, please refer to their school attendance policy.

Aims of the Cluster Attendance Policy are

- To raise attainment and achievement levels by having high expectations of attendance from all stakeholders from ages 0-19 years
- To raise the profile (in order to reduce the level) of truancy / parentally condoned truancy as pupils are not only losing valuable learning time but may also be putting themselves at risk of serious harm
- To create a culture in which good attendance is celebrated and accepted as the norm
- That all schools have a safe environment for the teaching, learning and development of pupils, hence encouraging outstanding attendance
- To work closely with other agencies to support pupils and families and in turn raise attendance
- To raise the profile and understanding and reduce the number of persistent absence with all stakeholders.

Procedures

Agreed Codes

All schools within the Cluster will use the agreed coding for absences and lates. Please see Appendix 1.

Absence due to appointments -Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments

We would expect that these appointments will take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the pupil's education. Full day absences for medical appointments will not be authorised unless discussion takes place between a senior member of staff and home. For medical appointments to be authorised, pupils or parents should produce the medical appointment card/letter, and these will be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher/School Attendance Leader. Pupils will be expected to attend school before or after the appointment (or both) depending on the time of the appointment. **Should this be an issue with individual medical practices, parents are entitled by law to request a copy of all medical appointments for their child. Parents can request a copy of their child's Patient Summary from the GP Practice.**

Exceptional Circumstances Absence

Each school within the Cluster expects that parents will take their holidays during the approved school break. It should be noted that there are 175 days each year when pupils are on holiday from school. The cost, convenience or availability of a particular holiday will not be taken into consideration.

Parents must accept that additional absence will be unauthorised and will be coded so upon their pupil's attendance record.

Absence for religious observance may be agreed by the Headteacher but will not exceed 2 days in any school year.

The Government has changed the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations in relation to term time holidays and this came into force on 1st September 2013.

This was further upheld by the Supreme Court judgement in the Isle of Wight in April 2017.

The generic penalty notice warning letter is sent to all parents at the start of the academic school year. Please see appendix 2.

All schools have published the penalty notice warning letter on their school websites.

As a result, Head Teachers can no longer allow any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This means that holidays in term time **will not** be authorised and will be marked as an unauthorised absence in the school register.

Any request for Exceptional Circumstances Absence must be put in writing to the Headteacher. Please see appendix 3.

In the event of a parent taking a pupil out of school for an unauthorised holiday, following the change in Government Regulations in September 2013 the school will always inform the local authority who can issue a fixed penalty.

See individual school policies.

Registers

Legally, registers must be taken twice daily am and pm, whereas at Cockburn there will be additional registers taken during individual sessions. All school registers will be taken immediately during a fire drill.

First day of absence

In the event of your child not being able to attend school parents must inform school before the start of the school day. Failing this, schools will try to make contact with parents on the first day of a pupil's absence. If schools are unable to make contact by telephone, text or home visit they will continue each successive day of absence, until they successfully make contact and find the reason for the absence. Records of first day contact and reasons for absence will be recorded. Failure to clarify the reason for absence will result in the absence remaining unauthorised and can be recorded as Parentally Condoned Truancy. The authorisation of any absence is at the Headteacher's discretion and there may be occasions when the Headteacher does not authorise absences, despite a reason being given.

Safeguarding

If a child continues to be absent with no reason, further enquiries will be made promptly. In the event of schools being unable to locate a child they will refer immediately to relevant external agencies. If a parent has applied for exceptional circumstances leave for their child, parents will be advised that if they do not return by the agreed return date then they may be taken off school roll whilst following [CME procedures](#). This could lead to the permanent loss of a school place.

Lates

- Once the bell rings for the start of the school day the doors are closed and pupils are classed as late

- Arrival after the agreed school start time means a pupil is late and will result in an L code being given on their attendance
- Registers will be closed 30 minutes after the start of the school day. Arrival after this time will result in the pupil receiving a U code, this is classed as an unauthorised absence
- Schools will monitor lateness and make contact with parents if their children are persistently late

Rewards

Each school will have a range of rewards in place, to promote good attendance. The pupils and parents are made aware of these rewards. See individual school guidelines for further clarification.

Duties and responsibilities

All staff across the Cluster, in all schools are responsible for promoting and raising attendance. The key leaders with additional responsibility in the implementation of this policy are the Headteacher, Lead for Attendance, SLT, Pastoral Staff and office staff with attendance responsibility, parents/carers, pupils themselves and the class/form teacher in conjunction with the Local Authority and Governors. A member of the Governing Body has a designated responsibility for Attendance.

Parent/Carer responsibilities

In order to prepare children for a successful school experience it is vital to promote good attendance from an early age. The Cluster promotes excellent attendance from 0- 19 years. All parents/carers

- have a legal responsibility to ensure their child/ren of school age receive a full time education and legally pupil's must go to school every day during term time unless there is a valid reason for non-attendance
- must inform the school on the first day of absence
- must provide school with a reason for non-attendance and an expected return date
- ensure that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance
- must ensure that their children are collected from school on time – late collection may result in a childcare charge being issued
- show any documentation requested by the school
- to book any medical appointments outside of the school day
- to book any holiday no matter how short out of school time

Pupils

Pupils should

- be aware that good attendance is important for their learning
- take responsibility for their own attendance as early as possible
- know the acceptable and unacceptable reasons for not coming to school
- know to report to the office if they are late and know there may be a consequence for arriving late into school

Class teachers

- will promote/encourage and celebrate good attendance through the school reward system
- must complete registers correctly and on time
- pass on information about absences given to them by parents in writing to the school office/lead on attendance or whoever is appropriate in their setting
- make pupils aware that every day counts and that their attendance is important
- will complete agreed school practices for raising/promoting attendance within the school (see individual school policies)
- if they have any concerns over a pupil's attendance, they must initially speak to the parents and speak to the school attendance team/member or staff responsible for monitoring attendance

Governors

Governors will

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy
- nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Headteacher/ Attendance Lead and to report back to the Governing Body
- ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent absentees or poor attendees
- monitor termly progress towards targets
- be responsible for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Cluster Attendance Working Group

Each school has a leader who is part of the Cluster Attendance Working Group. They are responsible for:

- attending all termly meetings and contributing ideas and providing data
- raising attendance within their individual schools along with the Headteacher and SLT
- monitoring and analysing data and making appropriate links to achievement
- promoting consistency throughout the school
- ensuring appropriate rewards for good attendance are embedded throughout school
- following close monitoring of procedures for persistent absentees and children who have poor attendance; this includes contacting parents and submitting detailed referrals to different agencies for Care and Support and the School Attendance Service
- ensuring requested data is submitted on time
- sending out the positive attendance message in assembly. Ensure the link between attendance and attainment is firmly in the minds of class teachers, pupils and parents.
- ensuring that individual schools arrange/attend reviews in school
- monitoring work of school's attendance team
- reviewing and evaluating school's attendance policy

School Attendance Team or designated person with schools. (Schools may have individual guidelines)

Those people nominated by schools will ensure school intervention is completed which includes:

- close monitoring and appropriate action takes place for all children and that evidence of actions are recorded
- sending texts/making phone calls and home visits when children are absent
- liaising with other relevant colleagues to identify children causing concern and to communicate all action to the Attendance Leader
- speaking to children and contacting parents regarding unsatisfactory attendance and agree improvement strategies
- liaising with Cluster for advice regarding attendance strategies
- collecting daily voicemail messages
- overseeing first day calls
- updating class teachers with information about the attendance of children in their class/form

- reporting periodically to the Senior Management Team and Governors
- analysing weekly attendance statistics for each year group to highlight trends
- keeping records and details of children undergoing attendance related casework
- keeping records and detailed chronology of:
 - all referrals and reasons
 - progress of each case
 - outcomes
 - named contacts
 - meetings with parents
 - consider referral to Care and Support Panel for family support

School Pastoral Staff

School pastoral staff will

- at the point of referral check school evidence gathered and discuss next steps with the school
- liaise and make referrals where necessary to other agencies – e.g. Family Support Worker; Social Care; Housing etc - to gather information and formulate action plans.
- support families and children to raise attendance and make regular visits and work directly with families/pupils who have been identified
- support in the form of an Early Help Plan where appropriate.
- ensure the Senior Leadership Team and designated attendance staff are kept well informed of any actions/developments for their pupils
- prepare evidence for legal action

Persistent Absentees

A pupil is classed as Persistently Absent when their attendance is 90% or below. Schools have a legal obligation to notify the local authority of pupils who are in this category which may result in legal action being taken.

The DFE category for Persistent Absentees is as follows:-

Classification of a Persistent Absentee at the end of each half term.	
Half Term 1 (Sept - October 1/2 term)	7 sessions missed from Sept –End HT1
Half Term 2 (November - Christmas Holiday)	14 sessions missed from Sept –End HT2
Half Term 3 (January - February 1/2 term)	20 sessions missed from Sept –End HT3
Half Term 4 (February - Easter Holiday)	25 sessions missed from Sept –End HT4
Half Term 5 (Easter - May 1/2 term)	31 sessions missed from Sept –End HT5
Half Term 6 (May - Summer Holidays)	38 sessions missed from Sept –End HT6 (HT5 - This is the figure reported for the year.)

Fast Tracks

All schools will identify children who meet the Fast Track criteria of 10 (or more) unauthorised absences in the last 12 weeks.

Schools will complete the initial stages of the Fast Track Process.

Parents/Carers who fail on the Fast Track may receive a Penalty Notice.

Appendix 1 –BCM Cluster Absence Codes

Code	Meaning/When to use
/	Present AM- morning session
\	Present PM- afternoon session
B	Based off site – at an approved educational setting
C	<p>Leave of absence authorised by the school Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil’s attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.</p>
D	Dual Registration – also on roll at another educational setting e.g. PRU
E	Fixed term exclusion
F	No longer in use
G	<p>Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.</p>
H	<p>Holiday authorised by the school Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher’s discretion.</p>
I	Illness – to be used at schools discretion- not parents

J	Interview
L	Late before register closes – If a child is between 5-45 minutes late. Time of arrival will be recorded.
M	Medical appointment e.g. dentist, doctors or time spent in hospital.
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance e.g. Eid Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence- can authorise up to 190 sessions a year as long as the parent has had to travel for work purposes. If the primary carer does not go travelling, and stays at home, then the absence would not be authorised.
U	Late – after registers close - 45 minutes after school starts.
V	Educational visit e.g. museum
W	Work experience
#	School closed to pupils and staff- snow, also used for training days
Y	Enforced school closure- e.g. snow, flood, gas leak
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Not on school roll
-	Should attend – no mark recorded



**Beeston,
Cottingley &
Middleton Cluster**

Working in Partnership to help Children, Young People and Families reach their goals



Appendix 2

Dear Parent/Carer

Taking time off school in term time

We are writing to inform you that the Government has changed the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations in relation to term time holidays which came into force on 1st September 2013.

As a result, Head Teachers can no longer allow any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This means that holidays in term time **will not** be authorised and will be marked as an unauthorised absence in the school register.

Unauthorised absences may result in a Penalty Notice being issued under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (as amended) which means that you will be fined for your child's absence.

Note: Payment of a Penalty Notice (from September 2013), if paid within 21 days, is £60. If you do not pay within 21 days the fine is increased to £120 and you have a further 7 days to make this payment in full.

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice within the total 28-day period could result in the commencement of criminal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The issuing of Penalty Notices relates to any unauthorised absence. Authorisation of absence is at the Head Teacher's discretion and if your child is absent for any reason such as illness, you may be required to provide school with evidence of the absence such as a medical appointment card or prescription.

If you are experiencing any difficulties that are affecting your child's attendance the school and the Cluster want to work with you to support you. Please contact the school in the first instance.

Yours Faithfully

Mandy Voller
Attendance Adviser

Joanne Hainsworth
Targeted Services Leader



LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM
Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances

Working in Partnership to help Children, Young People and Families reach their goals

Unauthorised leave may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (as amended)
By law, you must ask permission for your child to miss school. If you don't you risk a penalty notice.
Penalty notices can be issued per parent and per child.*

Name of School.....Date of request.....

PARENTS SECTION (to be completed first)

Surname of child		First name	
Date of birth		Class	
Surname of parent/guardian		First name	
Address of child			
Postcode		Telephone number	
About the request for your child's leave of absence	Reason for Absence		
	Total number of school days		From To
	Would he/she miss any national tests or examinations?		Yes/No
	Has he/she already had leave during term-time this school year? (If so, please give dates and number of school days leave)		Yes/No
	Did he/she have leave of absence during term-time in the previous school year?		Yes/No
Emergency telephone contact in the Leeds district			
Siblings name(s) and school(s) attended – if relevant			
Parent's/Guardian's Signature			

SCHOOL SECTION

Name of child:		Class:
Absence in Term Time From: _____ To: _____	i. Approved.....school days Not approvedschool days ii. Absence Code	Is the cluster AIO involved? YES/NO
Number of previous days authorised		Absence during tests or exams? YES/NO
Current percentage attendance		Office Staff Signature:
Last year's percentage attendance		Headteacher's Signature:

A copy of this form will be returned to the parent after consideration

**Payment of a Penalty Notice, if paid within 21 days, is £60.00. If you do not pay within 21 days, the fine is increased to £120.00 and you have a further 7 days to make this payment in full. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice within the total 28 day period could result in the commencement of criminal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under section 444 of the Education Act 1996*