

**Belmont Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**  
**Pupil Attendance Policy**

**Introduction**

It is important that parents and children develop a positive attitude to school attendance and punctuality so that they do not miss out on the opportunities at school. These qualities of reliability are also important in adult life.

Poor attendance, especially when condoned by parents, disrupts a child's education. This causes a lack of continuity and progression in school work and can establish patterns of behaviour which may lead to long-term truancy.

Belmont Church of England Primary School will work closely with other partners to ensure this policy is fulfilled, including the Department for Education (DfE) and the Education Welfare Service

**Aim**

This policy aims

- to improve pupils' attendance at school and to ensure that absence from school only occurs when pupils have a genuine reason;
- to help parents understand the importance of regular school attendance to pupil's educational success and seeks to gain the support of parents in its implementation.

**Legislative Framework**

Parents/guardians, schools and the Local Authority have legal responsibilities in ensuring that children attend school.

Parents/guardians of children of compulsory school age must ensure that their children receive an efficient and full-time education, either at school or otherwise (Education Act 1944 S.36).

Schools must maintain an attendance register in which each pupil is marked present or absent at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session (Pupils' Registration Regulation 1956).

Schools must publish attendance data showing the number of unauthorised absences in each term of the preceding school year, expressed as a percentage of the total number of possible attendances that term (The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991).

**Primary School Attendance Procedure**

Procedures in this policy take into consideration statutory and non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education, (DfE) and Local Authority (LA).

***Daily/Weekly Attendance Procedure***

- If your child is going to be absent from school, the parent/guardian should ring our school office before **8.45am** to inform school of the reason for the absence.
- At **9.30 am** school registers are checked for any absences for which we have no information.
- School staff will make a call to the parent/guardian if there has been no contact with school regarding the absence.
- If a pupil has been absent and school have not been able to find out any reason for absence from the parent/guardian, a home visit will be made, at least within three days, sooner if there are concerns.

***Categorising absence***

The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 require schools to determine whether an absence can be deemed to be authorised or whether the child should be regarded as being absent without permission i.e. truanting. In the terms of the legislation it is only the school that can approve the absence, not the parent. Here at Belmont C.E. Primary School absence will only be authorised for the following reasons:-

- i. Pupil illness.
- ii. Pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observation by the religious group to which the pupil's parents belong.
- iii. Pupil is participating in an approved public performance.
- iv. Permission has been granted by the Head Teacher through the Absence Request Procedure (see below).
- v. Pupil is absent following the death of a close family member.
- vi. Pupil has a medical or dental appointment, confirmed with an appointment card/letter. The child is expected to attend school prior to the appointment or return to school after the appointment - where possible medical or dental appointments should be booked outside of school hours.

### ***Monitoring Attendance***

As a school we monitor all areas of attendance and are required to provide the DfE and Education Social Work Service with our attendance data.

- The parent/guardian of **all** pupils with less than **95%** attendance will be sent a letter and a printout of their child's attendance for that term.
- The parent/guardian of **all** pupils with less than **90%** attendance will be sent a letter and printout of their child's attendance for that term. In addition the monitoring programme for pupils with attendance percentages between 90% and 80% will be half termly rather than termly.

### ***Persistent absentees***

Pupils whose attendance is less than **80%** are referred to as "Persistent Absentees" by the DfE and will be considered for referral to the Education Social Work Service. The Education Welfare Officer and school staff will then begin a programme of monitoring and support.

- Step 1 – parent/guardian, school staff and the Education Welfare Officer meet to discuss the absences and agree an action plan to improve attendance.
- Step 2 – A letter summarising the discussion and a copy of the action plan is posted to the parent/guardian.
- Step 3 – After 6 weeks the attendance printout is reviewed by school staff and the Education Welfare Officer.
  - If the percentage has improved to above 80% half-termly monitoring is implemented.
  - If the percentage remains below 80% the parent/guardian is invited to a second meeting with school staff and the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the absences where further, more formal, actions are outlined.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence**

Absence for anything other than through illness or medical reasons during term time is actively discouraged.

Parents requesting time out of school for their child during term time should obtain a 'Leave of Absence' request form from the school office before booking a family holiday.

The DfE has published new amendments to the Pupil Registration Regulations which come into force from September 2013 and relate to Holidays in Term Time, Penalty Notices and Deletions from the school register.

The amendments make clear that Head Teachers **may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

The Headteacher will define 'exceptional circumstances' and also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Leave of absence will be discouraged during September to ensure that pupils have a settled start to the New Year. It will never be authorised in May during SATs.

### **Penalty Notices**

Failure to return your child on the agreed date could result in a penalty fine of £60 (per parent, per child) being issued and your child losing their place at school.

**Amendments to the 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.**

### **Punctuality**

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out of the beginning of each school day. This time can be important because information is often given out which allows for the smooth running of the day and helps pupils feel part of the school community.

- The school opens at 8.50 a.m. and pupils should be in school at this time to change from outdoor clothing and enter their classroom for registration at 8.55am. All entrances, with the exception of the main school entrance, are closed at 9.00 a.m. Registers close at 9.10am. Pupils arriving between 9.00 and 9.10am will be marked 'Late'. Those arriving after 9.10am will be marked as 'Unauthorised Absence'.
- If a child is persistently late, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the head teacher in order to determine the reasons for the lateness. At this time a monitoring plan will be arranged and the Education Welfare Officer notified of the persistent lateness.

### **Class Registers:**

The class teacher should take the register at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. School uses SIMS as their registration management system.

Codes are allocated according to the reasons for the absence or attendance.

The register should be saved immediately and admin staff will convert the marks via SIMs.net to ascertain all pupils' whereabouts.

Signed:            Head teacher .....

Chair of Governors .....

Date: January 2015