

BROAD CHALKE CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2017

Mission Statement: With the love of God we learn, care, grow and share

At Broad Chalke Primary School, we recognise the importance of promoting regular attendance and punctuality so that all children can benefit from equal access to:

- The values and ethos of our caring, Christian environment.
- Our broad and balanced curriculum.
- The opportunity to raise their own level of attainment.

Aims

Through our policy we aim to:

- Ensure that children make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning.
- Emphasise a commitment to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that everyone within the school community understands the issues and procedures for attendance.
- Fulfil the statutory duties in relation to school attendance.

School Attendance - the Statutory Framework

Education Act 1944

This establishes the duty of parents to ensure regular attendance of pupils.

Pupil's Registration Regulations 1986

This establishes the criteria for the maintenance of Attendance Registers.

Education Act 1996

This places a legal obligation on the Local Authority to provide education suitable to a child's age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs they may have and also Section 444 states that "The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law".

From 1st September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended. The amendments remove all reference to the statutory threshold that a Head teacher may grant up to 10 school days leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term time. The amendments make it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- Should the Head teacher feel that exceptional circumstances are clear in the application for holiday leave then it is up to Head teachers to determine the length of any leave granted.
- The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that unauthorised absence is investigated and where deemed necessary and appropriate that compulsory school attendance is enforced via the prosecution of the responsible parent. However to be effective in raising, promoting and sustaining good levels of attendance it is not just the Local Authorities

enforcement role that is important; schools have a crucial role in supporting, encouraging and informing parents and pupils of expected attendance levels and school policy and action where attendance is a concern.

- In supporting schools to reduce holiday absence the Local Authority has provision to receive referrals from schools to issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised holiday leave during term time. Where the exceptional circumstances criteria has not been met and schools warn parents in writing that the absence will be unauthorised and referred to the Local Authority this provision can be actioned if the school feel this is an appropriate course of action. The Penalty Notice is issued initially at £60 per parent per child payable within 21 days of issue. Should the parent(s) fail to pay this, then Penalty Notice fine increases to £120 per parent per child from the 22nd day of issue to the 28th. Subsequently to this if payment is not received the Local Authority will consider initiating prosecution proceedings for the unauthorised holiday absence.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence. For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance. We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically. All other absences are unauthorised

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Unapproved Holidays
- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.
- There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with the school policy following guidance from the Education Act 1996 and as agreed by the governors. The Education Welfare Officer may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

Punctuality

- The bell goes at 9:00 and morning registration is between 9:05 – 9:10am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom, so you need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by between 8:50 and 9:00.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.

- Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.

Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 6, parents are asked to

- Give the school full information about their plans including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving.
- Let us know when you move

Children Missing Education

When pupils leave and you have not given us the above information, and we cannot contact you, then your child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services) the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child. By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

Child Protection Statement

At Broad Chalke Primary School, we believe that every child has the right to be safe and therefore to be cared for in a way that ensures her/his safety and meets her/his individual needs. We recognise that all children need protection at all times from anything or anyone that may cause them harm and work together following the Child Protection Policy to ensure this. We respect all members of the school's community and treat information with confidentiality.

Partnership Working – Roles & Responsibilities of the School

- The Headteacher carries the responsibility for improving and maintaining good attendance as well as overseeing that attendance is recorded and non-attendance is investigated.
- The Headteacher will work, when necessary, in close association with the Educational Welfare Officer on any issues related to poor or unauthorised attendance.
- The class teachers are responsible for maintaining accurate registers and adhering to all agreed registration procedures.
- The School admin officer is responsible for adhering to all agreed registration procedures and keeping the Headteacher advised of any attendance issues.
- The Headteacher will work with the School Business Manager to ensure absence figures are returned to the DfE annually.

Partnership Working – Roles & Responsibilities of the Parents

Parents are asked to:

- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn' (i.e. not too tired or too hungry).
- Work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's education.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance.

- Avoid unauthorised absences by only taking holidays out of term time.

Procedures – School

- Registers (when not in use) are stored in the school office.
- Attendance registers are to be taken twice a day by the class teacher. Registration times are: 9.05am – 9.10am and, 1.15pm – 1.20pm.
- An early morning club exists to help working parents and children can arrive in school from 8am if they are signed in to Early Birds.
- The correct registration codes must be used. A current checklist of codes and explanations are to be found at the front of each class register.
- Where pupils miss registration altogether and parents fail to provide an adequate explanation, they should be marked as an unauthorised absence even though they may arrive later. This is vital to emphasise the importance of punctuality.
- Excluded pupils – where a pupil has been temporarily excluded, he or she should remain on the school role. As the absence results from specific action by the Headteacher, it should be treated as authorised.
- Registers may remain open for a maximum of thirty minutes. If a child arrives within this time they are marked as late.
- As soon as the morning register has been closed, it must be sent to the School admin officer who will respond immediately to any unexplained absences.
- As soon as the School admin officer receives the morning attendance registers, it is her duty to contact the parents or guardians of any pupils who are absent without authorisation in the interest of Child Protection. This action must be taken within the first hour of the school day. The Headteacher must be advised immediately of any concerns linked to unexplained absences.
- Upon completion of the afternoon register, any unexplained absences must be reported immediately to the Headteacher or her representative in her absence. Registers then need to be returned to their correct storage area. If a child should be found to be absent without any authorisation, an immediate search of the buildings and grounds must be made. If the child is still missing, the police and parents are to be called without fail.
- It is the duty of the staff to alert the Headteacher to any concerns they might have with regard to pupil lateness or absence. The Headteacher will review the circumstances and, if appropriate, contact the Educational Welfare Officer.
- The Headteacher alone may grant all forms of permission for absence from school. Any parents who approach class teachers with regard to such issues must always be redirected to the Headteacher who will decide accordingly whether or not to give authorisation.
- All forms of absences are to be recorded daily by the admin officer stating clearly the date, name of pupil and reason for absence.
- The school is not obliged to accept explanations where there is reason to doubt their validity. Where explanations have given cause for concern, a note should be retained as a welfare concern.
- The Headteacher will regularly monitor the attendance registers and procedures to ensure that all systems are working smoothly and correctly. This is in addition to the statutory checks made by the Educational Welfare Officer.

- During a fire drill or actual fire, the School Business Manager will take the registers and visitor's book outside to the emergency registration zone.
- At the Headteacher's discretion, leave of absence may be granted for medical appointments and exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence will not be granted for the period of time during which the SATs tests are being taken.
- The class teachers will monitor registers to see if there are any emerging patterns of lateness or absence and, in the first instance mention this to parents and report it to the Headteacher who may then write to parents if there is no improvement.

Procedures – Parents

- Should a child be ill and is unable to attend school, parents are asked to contact the school between 8.30 – 9.00am or as soon as possible thereafter. The school needs to be kept regularly informed of how long the absence is likely to last.
- Parents are asked to arrange as many medical appointments as possible to be outside school hours but we recognise that this is not always possible. In such instances, a note should be sent in advance of the appointment to the school office.
- Parents are asked to keep us regularly informed of any circumstances which may possibly be affecting their child's attendance.
- Signing in/out – parents are asked to sign their children in to school if they are late or upon return from an appointment. Similarly, pupils need to be signed out by parents via the school office if they are taken out for an appointment.

Strategies for assuring good attendance

To improve and maintain pupil attendance, we will:

- Raise understanding and awareness of our attendance policy.
- Display sensitivity to the needs of individual pupils.
- Congratulate pupils for their punctuality.
- Regularly monitor our attendance figures and respond swiftly to any areas of concern.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The governing body will be informed of absence figures annually via the Headteacher's report in order to undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy.

Ratified by FGB: 2009

Reviewed: June 2017

Next Review due: June 2020