



Bellfield Infant School

Attendance Policy

We aim to improve the attendance of Bellfield Infant School to at least 96% and to provide an environment that encourages all our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. This is vital if we are to ensure they succeed in school and in their future lives. The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance -parents, pupils and all school staff.

School's Responsibilities:-

All the staff at Bellfield Infant School will provide an ethos, which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring that pupils have good attendance by:-

- marking attendance registers accurately;
- correctly recording between authorised and unauthorised absence (a letter or message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence – only the Head Teacher can decide whether the parent's explanation justifies the absence);
- contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences, and recording the contact;
- promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents when a child is absent if parents have not contacted the school);
- acknowledging good or improved attendance of individual pupils
- keeping a record of lateness and the reason.

The Head Teacher will investigate persistent offenders.

Parents' Responsibilities:-

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says:-

“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence“.

(NB Where the Education Act refers to 'he', it also means 'she')

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's absence. This should be by telephone, text or written message on the first day of absence before 9.00a.m.

If a pupil is brought to school persistently late the parent will receive a punctuality letter to remind them of the importance of good punctuality and to inform them of their legal responsibility.

Whenever possible, parents should not make medical or dental appointments for their children during school hours.

Parents **do not** have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time other than extenuating circumstances agreed by Head Teacher.

Pupils Responsibilities:-

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties, which might prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

REGISTRATION:

- Classroom teachers are responsible for attendance registers
- Registers will be called promptly at 9:00am and 1.00pm by the class teacher
- Children who arrive between 9:00am and 9:30am will be marked as late.
- Registers will close at 9.30am and 1.20pm
- If a pupil arrives after the register closes at 9:30am they will be registered as absent for the morning session
- Pupils who arrive late should report to the office where their arrival will be noted.

Who will amend the register?

The office administrator will amend the registers to indicate lateness.

If an unacceptable explanation for the late arrival is not received from the parents the register will show an **unauthorised absence**

Weekly Attendance:

These are completed each week by the School Office.

There is a 'Bellfield Bear' who is the attendance mascot and the class with the best attendance will have the mascot in their class the following week to celebrate their achievement and they will also have the silver cup.

Where a class achieves 100% attendance each child in that class will receive a balloon to celebrate. If a class achieves 100% attendance three times in one term the class will receive a special treat.

There will be an annual attendance week to help raise the importance of attending regularly and on time.

Authorised/Unauthorised:

Providing an explanation is received, an absence can be authorised for:-

- Illness
- Dental/medical appointments (if during school time is unavoidable)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Exceptional special occasions, e.g. Family wedding (please fill out 'leave of absence' form)
- Participation in an approved public performance

It will remain unauthorised:-

- If no explanation is received from parents
- For shopping trips
- For unexceptional special occasions. e.g. birthdays
- For family holidays
- For family exceptional occasions such as weddings etc., where prior permission was not sought or was refused

Following up absences:-

Rapid responses are essential if there is no contact from the parent on the first day of absence before 9.00a.m., then the school will contact the parent/carer.

In cases where there is doubt about an explanation received, contact should be made with the parent.

Strategies employed to support pupils and parents:-

On a daily basis the school administrator goes through the registers and any absences are noted. Any reasons given for absence are noted. If no reason is available, a phone call or group call to the home will be made. If there is no response, a letter may be sent. Copies of all calls and letters are kept on file for a school year.

- If there is a developing pattern of concern of attendance or it falls below 92%, a letter will be sent to parents outlining concerns about attendance.
- If there is no significant improvement, the School will contact the parents to discuss attendance.
- If there is still cause for concern the parent/carer will be asked to attend a meeting in school to discuss attendance with Head teacher.
- If all efforts to improve attendance are unsuccessful the school may issue a formal warning and refer to the Education Legal Intervention Team where parents could be prosecuted under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

Acknowledging good attendance:-

A certificate will be given to children who obtain 100% attendance during a school term/year

There is a weekly celebration for the class with the highest attendance and they will look after Bellfield Bear, the school mascot, for the following week together with the silver cup.

If a class achieves 100% attendance in a week they receive a balloon each to celebrate.

Support for pupils who have difficulties attending school:-

Where pupils are absent with good reason (for example because of exclusion or long-term illness) a member of staff will co-ordinate meaningful work to be sent home and will ensure it is marked on a regular basis.

When pupils who have been absent for whatever reason return, whether authorised or unauthorised, they will be welcomed back to school.

A Guide for Parents

1. When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be in school in good time for registration; the doors will be open from 8:50am. The morning register will be called promptly at **9:00am** and the afternoon register at **1.00pm**.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at **9.30am** in the morning and **1.20pm** in the afternoon.

Pupils who arrive between **9:00am and 9:30am** will be marked as late.

If your child arrives after **9.30am** they will be marked as **unauthorised for the morning session**.

If your child arrives after **1.20pm** they will be marked as **unauthorised for the afternoon session**.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the Late Door, where a member of the school office will request a reason for the lateness and will enter your child's name in the 'Late Book'. If a pupil is repeatedly late, a meeting will be arranged with the Head Teacher and/or Attendance Officer to discuss reasons/difficulties for lateness and the school will offer support to overcome any difficulties.

3. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We expect a parent to telephone or text the school on the first day of absence by 9.00a.m. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
- (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Special exceptional circumstances (i.e. Family wedding etc).
- Extended family visits abroad (only when prior approval has been given – see question 8)

Except in the case of illness, you must ask for permission for your child to be absent well in advance, providing appointment letters where necessary, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays. Headlice and the treatment of it is not a reason for your child to be absent.

6. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a pro-active response to absences: we will contact you if we have not heard from you by 9.00a.m. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

7. Can we take family holidays during term time?

There is no entitlement to leave of absence in term time. Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time, you must complete a 'leave of absence' form, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. Except for exceptional circumstances, The Head Teacher is unlikely to be able to authorise such requests, however consideration will be given to:-

- Reason for request
- Your child's age
- The time of year
- Overall attendance pattern of your child

The Head Teacher is unlikely to approve your child's absence if the timing of the holiday coincides with assessments or periods of transition. Leave in term time may lead to a penalty notice and prosecution.

8. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended trip overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such trips are important and help children keep in touch with their extended family. Contact the Head Teacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

9. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. A good breakfast will improve learning. Ensure he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

10. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher or Head Teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems or family difficulties etc. it is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. We are happy to help you and your child overcome such difficulties.

We appreciate all your support concerning your child's attendance and value you working in partnership with us to ensure that we can maintain the highest levels of attendance as possible.