

Bonneygrove Primary School

Attendance Policy

Subject:	Attendance
Approval date:	March 2020
Review date:	March 2022
Approved by Chair of Governors	Shen Hasekilerden



Aim and Objectives

To maximise attendance and punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils have access to the full education offered by our school. We realise for our pupils to achieve a good standard of academic and social success in school they need to attend school on a regular basis.

Statutory Framework

A pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil.

The school is by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone call from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. An absence will only be authorised if the school is satisfied with the validity of the explanation offered.

This policy is written in line with the local authority policy on school attendance.

(Education Act 1996, Section 444 as amended by Section 82 and 109 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006)

Responsibilities

The Head teacher will have overall responsibility for attendance at Bonneygrove. However, improving attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - parents, pupils and all staff.

Specific responsibilities are as follows:

Parents will:

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify the school by 9.00am every day of absence giving reasons if their child is absent or late, by phone call or in writing to the school office
- ensure their child has had 24 hours without sickness and diarrhoea before they return to school
- avoid making medical, dental or other appointments within school hours
- not take days out of school for reasons not seen as exceptional
- not take holidays in term time

Pupils will

- attend school regularly, punctually and ready to learn

School will:

- complete registers correctly and keep them up-to-date at all times
- inform the head teacher if they notice any low attendance or deterioration in attendance
- inform parents early if they notice any low or deterioration in attendance
- liaise with parents and children directly in supporting attendance
- (Registers are legal documents and **MUST** be completed fully and kept up-to-date. They must be marked twice a day at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions).
- Registers should open and close at regular, set times and this information should be publicised to parents.
- When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools should use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education
- When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.
- include an attendance sheet with each child's annual report giving information regarding absences that the pupil has accrued during that school year
- to discuss the impact of low attendance on learning with parents at consultation meeting where appropriate.
- weekly attendance to be displayed on class doors
- call for explanations for absence if none have been provided
- maintain a register of children who have regular absences in order to aid monitoring by the Head teacher and Attendance Improvement Officer
- contact parents on the first day of absence for any child with an unexplained absence and continue to contact with more than one call on the same day if there is no answer.
- prepare attendance reports termly for the Governing Body
- provide information to the Head teacher to identify poor and good attenders and prepare certificates for celebrating 100% attendance half-termly, and best class half-termly attendance.
- liaise with the Attendance Improvement Officer in taking action for any child whose attendance is causing concern
- work with parents and children directly in supporting attendance
- Ensure that the school procedures follow local authority guidance and policies
- Reward good attendance
- Ensure that all personnel are trained on safeguarding, the Prevent strategy and other relevant training to comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015

Punctuality

Take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality.

Lateness should be monitored and followed up. Persistent lateness does not constitute full school attendance (Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996)

The school day begins at 08:50am and pupils are required to be in school by then. The morning register is closed at 09:10am. Children arriving after the opening of the register up to and including the 20th minute will be marked as 'late' and those arriving after the 21st minute will receive an unauthorised absence. All pupils arriving late have to sign in the late book in the school office.

A penalty notice for persistent lateness can be requested by the headteacher.

Attendance Improvement Officer will:

- monitor the attendance of each child
- meet with the head teacher to discuss any necessary action.
- complete monitoring forms each term indicating actions to be taken
- liaise with the school if the child remains an open case to the AIO or where any legal action is being taken
- advise the school on strategies for improving attendance
- assist the school in identifying persistent absentees and ensuring plans of action are in place

Notifying the school of a child's absence

If there is no explanation:

1. The school will contact you by text and or telephone.
2. If there is still no satisfactory explanation the school may discuss the case with the Attendance Improvement Officer and the child's absence will be unauthorised.

Child Missing in Education

Failure for parents to contact the school where a child is missing in education will result in a referral to the Local Authority for further investigation.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absences

Bonneygrove will adhere to the following criteria when deciding if an absence should be authorised or not. These are based on the guidance in "School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence.

Absence can be authorised if:

- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause and a written letter of explanation has been received/ or the parent notified the school office by telephone and passed this information to the class teacher. Evidence that your child has been to the GP will be asked for. This could be in the form of a letter/prescription or card with a doctor's signature (**medical evidence is required for 4 days or more**)

- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in para. 47 of the guidance are met
- There is an immediate family bereavement
- The pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special tuition
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional occasion (eg., a wedding/funeral of an immediate relative) *note only 1 day will be authorised for a wedding
- The school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following: the child's transport to and from school; boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school; enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- Leave of absence should be granted to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (c) for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the head teacher.
- The pupil was absent with leave granted by the Head teacher
- The pupil has been temporarily excluded from school

Absence should be unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- The pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings
- The pupil is shopping
- The pupil is away for unexceptional occasions (eg., a birthday)
- The pupil is on a family holiday

Low Attendance – A cause for concern

This is classed as any child that has attendance lower than 94%.

You may have followed the procedures for notifying the school of a child's absence, however the school will;

1. Notify you by letter where attendance is lower than 94%
2. Where no improvements are made a second letter will be sent informing you that attendance will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided
3. Should no improvement be made at this point please refer to the information regarding a Penalty Notice
4. Where there is an ongoing medical problem the school will liaise with the family to offer support as necessary and work in partnership

Holidays

Changes to legislation, which came into force in September 2013, made clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers NO LONGER have the discretion to allow up to 10 school days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree to extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

If there are exceptional circumstances behind your request, write into the headteacher explaining your exceptional request. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and you may be fined or legal action taken against you.

The Use of Legal Action

If a pupil, who is registered at Bonneygrove fails to attend regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, of an Education Supervision Order relating the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' may include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

In cases where parents wilfully withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the ISL Attendance Teams will begin legal proceeding promptly on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

Should you receive a fine for persistent and/or unauthorised absence details are below:

£60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice

£120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice

If the penalty notice is not paid fully by the end of the 28 day period the local authority must prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the education act 1996 or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

- Ensuring the implementation of the "Safe, Kind, Brilliant" ethos, so that pupils feel valued and welcome at Bonneygrove
- Ensuring an interesting and flexible curriculum which meets pupils needs
- Regular monitoring of attendance and analysis of data takes place to help identify actions for improvement
- Weekly 'Bee on time' whole school assembly with the head teacher and reward tokens
- Certificates for children with 100% attendance on a half termly basis.
- Certificates for children with 100% attendance for the year.
- Parents of pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern (less than 94%) will be notified by letter as a reminder. Where no improvement is made a further letter requesting a meeting with a member of the Headship team will be sent.
- Parents are regularly reminded of the importance of good attendance via newsletters, parent's evenings, induction meetings, etc.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for an extended period will have access to partner services to support during absence and be re-integrated into school upon their return
- The head teacher holds termly meetings with the Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those with attendance difficulties
- Discussions with secondary schools to support the transfer process
- All members of staff are clear about their responsibilities
- Where there has been long term absence the Head teacher will work with the family and other services to integrate the child back into school
- School attendance figures are published in newsletters
- Poster promoting good attendance are displayed around the school (see appendix I)
- Where a child's attendance is improved this is celebrated with pupil and parents

Appendix I

Good attendance means...

Being in school for at least 96% of the time. This means a maximum of 8 days off a year.

**175 non-school days a year!
All this time for holidays and appointments!**

365 days in the calendar year

190 days in a school year

0 days Absence	8 days Absence	19 days Absence	29 days Absence	38 days Absence	47 days Absence
190 days of education a year	182 days of education a year	171 days of education a year	161 days of education a year	152 days of education a year	143 days of education a year
100% Attendance	96% Attendance	90% Attendance	85% Attendance	80% Attendance	75% Attendance

Good

A child has the best start to their schooling and has the best chance of reaching their potential and having success
Good progress made.

Worrying

Below 90% is considered persistent absenteeism and the local authority may become involved and take action. Absence is greatly affecting progress and attainment. Less chance of success.

Serious Concern

A serious impact on education, a child will find it extremely difficult to keep up and achieve their best. Results in referral to Attendance improvement officer and the local authority will take action against parents and carers

