



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Brook Primary School 2021/2022

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Schools Mission Statement

As a school, we do our utmost to develop a partnership with parents and value the relationship between school and home; we work with the community to drive the school forward and ensure the children in our care are the very best that they can be. You and your child/ren play an important role in making our school successful.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Learning: - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (July 2018)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021)

Protecting children from maltreatment. Preventing impairment of children's health or development. Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances. Detecting early support through school's support strategies or an Early Help Assessment.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Newsletter;
- Report to you at least half-termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Unauthorised leave of absence/holiday or day trips in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.



Any student attending Brook Primary School identified as having **attendance below 93%** risks having all further absence **unauthorised** on schools register.

However, should parent(s) provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary, the absence for the evidenced period will be authorised.

Attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID 19):

School follows guidance from the Department for Education and Public Health; Recording attendance addendum (July 2021) and Schools COVID-19 operational guidance (August 2021). Key attendance points are:

Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education
- All clinically extremely vulnerable children and young people should attend school unless they have been advised by their pediatric clinician or other specialist not to attend.
- If anyone in school develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), however mild, school should send them home and they should follow public health advice.
- In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and schools should strongly encourage pupils to take a PCR test.
- Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance: guidance for schools](#).

If your child has symptoms of COVID-19:

- We ask parents and children to follow the NHS advice of "When to self-isolate and what to do"
- If your child has any symptoms of COVID-19 they should self-isolate and have a PCR test.
- Parents are to notify the school of the PCR results and date of return to school.

COVID-19

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead lateral flow test for seven days from the point of contact or get a PCR test (if they have symptoms) and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

Marking of register in relation to COVID-19:

- Where a child is required to self-isolate or quarantine because of COVID-19 in accordance with relevant legislation or guidance published by PHE or the DHSC they should be recorded as code X (not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus). Where they are unable to attend because they have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they should be recorded as code I (illness).
- For pupils abroad who are unable to return, code X is unlikely to apply. In some specific cases, code Y (unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances) will apply.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorized Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorized absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorized absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorized absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorized absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorized absence
O	Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorized absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorized absence
S	Study leave	Authorized absence

T	Traveler absence	Authorized absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorized absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19. Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils.	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence; telephone 01384 389888
- *Please note "illness" alone is not acceptable – the specific type of illness must be stated;*
- If you have failed to make contact please send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence;

If your child is absent we will:

- Text you on the morning of the first day of absence;
- If we have not heard from you we will endeavor to make telephone contact;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Support Officer and/or a member of the senior management team if absences persist;



- If necessary refer the matter to our Attendance Support Officer and/or the Local Authority if attendance moves below 95%.

Parent/Carers Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence. We need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. **You have a duty to notify school as soon as possible of any changes to contact details.**

Attendance Concerns:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, the school may discuss matters with our appointed Attendance Support Officer. He/she will discuss matters and try to resolve the situation by agreement. However, if your child's attendance does not improve and unauthorized absences persist school may refer the case to our Independent Attendance Officer, or to the local authority who are a statutory service who issue sanctions such as Penalty Notices or refer the case for prosecution in the Magistrates Court, based on the evidence provided by the school.

Parents can contact the Local authority themselves on 01384 814317. For general information regarding school absence visit: www.dudley.gov.uk

School Attendance Strategies:

- **Weekly attendance analysis**
- **Improved attendance letter**
- **Attendance certificates**
- **Attendance assemblies**
- **Interventions (thrive/meet and greet)**
- **Maintaining positive communication (school refuser/long term illness etc)**
- **First day absence contact**
- **Unexplained absence letter**
- **Punctuality letter**
- **Suspected holiday in term time letter**
- **Issue below 95% attendance letter**
- **Issue below 93% attendance letter (medical evidence required)**
- **Issue below 90% (persistent absence) letter**
- **Attendance clinics**
- **Home visits (Doorstep only during COVID).**
- **LEA referrals**

If your child's attendance does not improve and unauthorised absences persist school may refer the case to Dudley Council, Education Investigation Service (EIS). They are a statutory service who issue sanctions such as Penalty Notices or refer the case for prosecution in the Magistrates Court, based on the evidence provided by the school.



Parents can contact the Local Authority themselves to ask for guidance on their procedures. Their telephone number is 01384 814317.

The School Day:

The school day starts between 8:30-8:50am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers will be marked at 8:50am and your child will receive a 'L' late mark if they are not present in the class.

The register will be closed 30 minutes after school's start time. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a 'U' mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. If unauthorised lateness persists it could result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or enforcement proceedings against you.

Late Arrivals must to be signed in via the main school office. Children in Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 **must** be accompanied by an adult. Only children in Year 5 and Year 6 are able to sign in unaccompanied.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff and/or Attendance Support Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Our school day ends at 3.20pm for Reception and at 3.30 for pupils in KS1 & KS2.

When children need to come and go during the school day they must be signed in and out at the school office. **This is an exceptionally important procedure to ensure the safety of both pupils and staff in the event of fire or an emergency.**

Holidays in Term Time/Leave of Absence:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

"It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are exceptional reasons, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the head teacher (not the Local Authority) or his/her designate may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing/on a form provided by the school. Where a parent takes a leave of absence to which the application was refused or takes a leave



of absence where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty fine (upon a return from such leave) by the Local Authority may be requested. When requesting a fixed penalty fine the school may calculate the period of days taken within a 12-week period”

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be considered unless –

- (a) an application has been made in advance to the Headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
- (b) the Headteacher, or a person authorised by the Headteacher in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

In light of the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulations, Brook Primary School will only grant leave where parents can prove exceptional circumstances.

All applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least 5 school days prior to the requested leave date.

Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing. A general guide for parent's, is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13-week holiday time would not be authorised.

On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register.

Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5 day notice will result in all absence being recorded as (O) (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

If a pupil does not return to school after the leave of absence date, school will investigate the reasons surrounding the absence, refer to the Local Authority and under Regulation 8, 1 (f) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 consider removal from the school register.

The Law

Under the 1944 Education Act, parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive “efficient full-time education”. Education is compulsory. Once parents have registered a child at school, Parents (not the child) commit an offence if the child does not attend regularly.

The Local Education Authority can prosecute a parent of a pupil failing to attend school regularly under section 444, Education Act 1996. On conviction, the offence carried a fine of £2,500 for each absent child.

The LA consider that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs (a



fine of £60 per child per parent): Overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time or persistent late arrival at school.

Every absence has to be recorded by the school as either:- **AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED**

- Please make sure your child attends school regularly
- Please make sure your child arrives at school on time
- Please contact the school on the first day that your child is absent on 01384 389888. If we have not received a message by 9.30 am we may telephone you for information
- Please make sure the late book is completed by a member of staff if your child is late for school and that you provide reason for lateness
- Please complete a leave of absence form asking for permission to take your child out of school during term time
- Please notify the school if you change your telephone or emergency contact number, as soon as possible

Authorised absence is the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered following an absence as satisfactory justification ascribed ie illness, hospital appointment, family bereavement.

All other absence is categorised as unauthorised.

NB according to the Law, it is school alone (not parents) who decide if an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

Children Missing Education:

If you move out of area and the distance is too far to travel to Brook Primary, please notify us immediately. We advise you contact the admissions department (of the Local Authority where you now reside) as quickly as possible to obtain a new school place, as often places are limited.

All schools must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations D of E (2016). If your child ceases to attend school and we have had no contact from parent, we will deem this as a safeguarding issue. We will try to contact you and may undertake a home visit. We will then follow the local authority referral procedure for a child missing education before removal from roll.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to children fulfilling their potential.



Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

(Roles & Responsibilities/School Procedures)

Mrs Marie Fellows: Head Teacher

Mr Matthew Allen: Deputy Headteacher & Governor

Miss Sheryl Nicklin: Assistant Head Teacher

Mrs Ilona Wyld: Governor

Mr Tom Macdonald: Governor

Ms Sophie Gilbert: Governor

Mr Paul Weston: (Independent Attendance Officer)

Mrs Donna Felton: Admin Support Officer responsible for attendance

Summary:

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to guarantee as high a level of attendance as possible and that through good attendance ensure every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Date of Policy/Review: September 2022/ January 2022 (COVID update)