

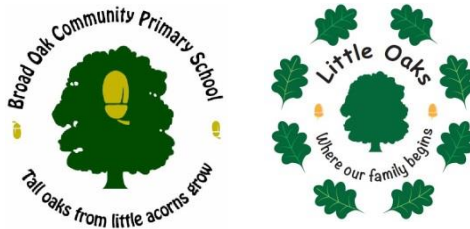


## Attendance Policy 2022

**Broad Oak Community  
Primary School**

The Policy was reviewed and discussed at the FGB on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022

The Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually in line with statutory guidance.



**Introduction:**

At Broad Oak Community Primary School we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling our children to reach their full potential by maximising the educational opportunities available to them and will help them become more emotionally resilient. We value all pupils and will work with our families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and put measures in place to support the family to resolve these.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community and work together to improve whole school attendance. This policy should not be viewed in isolation but as part of our whole school ethos. This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding and behaviour, and also by our inclusive approach to education.

**Equality statement:**

The Governors and staff at Broad Oak Community Primary School are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all students regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background and to encourage them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. All students have access to the curriculum and the right to a learning environment which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping. School aims to encourage students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

**Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education:**

Government research shows that missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and studies show that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. In addition to using these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance.

Local authorities, the police, school governing bodies, school head teachers (and staff authorised by the head) and teachers-in-charge of pupil referral units are required by law to have regard to the relevant parts of this guidance when carrying out their functions in relation to parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices.

This extract relates to and replaces previous guidance on *Ensuring Children's Right to Education, and statutory guidance on Education-related parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices* published in September 2007.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- act early to address patterns of absence
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons

**Rights and Responsibilities:**

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

School will work closely with Parents/Carers if attendance and/or punctuality become a cause for concern.

**Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

From September 2015 the government set the persistent absence (PA) threshold at 10% of a pupil's possible attendance. This means that any student who has 10% absence or above (90% attendance or below) fall into this category. The government do not distinguish between absence that is **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

Schools are judged on the number of PA pupils they have in school and are expected to investigate, support and challenge absence that is approaching or meets the above threshold.

If a student is absent and no message has been received then a home visit may be completed by the Educational Welfare officer or the Pastoral Team. If the pastoral team have concerns about a child with an unexplained absence, a home visit may be conducted on the first day for safeguarding reasons or in the case where attendance is a concern.

For each student we expect a minimum attendance level of 95% to enable him or her to reach maximum academic achievement.

Pupils falling below 95% will follow the school pathway, up to and including a fixed penalty notice.

**The school day:**

- Broad Oak operates a 'soft opening' to the school day, with doors being opened at 8.40am. From this time, children can go straight to their classrooms to complete a morning activity.
  
- The school day officially starts at 8.55am.
  
- The morning register is recorded and saved by 9.00am
  
- Pupils entering school after 9.00am are recorded as late 'L' on the register. They must now enter through the schools reception and must sign in at the front desk. Pupils must record the time they arrive and the reason why they are late.
  
- The registers close at 10.00am. Students arriving after this time without a valid reason will be recorded as 'U', this is counted as an unauthorised absence even though the pupil is in school.
  
- If a pupil arrives late due to attending a medical appointment, they must provide evidence of the appointment to the reception staff in the form of an appointment card or hospital letter in order for the register to be marked appropriately.

The afternoon registers are recorded at:

EYFS + KS1: 12.45pm

Year 3: 1.15pm

Years 4, 5 and 6: 1.30pm

**Safeguarding absent pupils:**

School operates a first day response system; this means parents are expected to contact school on the first day of any absence to explain why their child is not in school by phone, text or by speaking to a member of staff.

Unexplained absences will be followed up with a text or a phone call from pastoral staff. For safeguarding reasons school will attempt to contact parents until we receive a response, this may also involve a home visit to ascertain the reason for the absence.

**Medical appointments:**

Only urgent or unavoidable medical appointments should be made during school time and pupils should return to school as soon as possible after the appointment. Routine dental checks or medical appointments should be made outside school time whenever possible. Parents must provide evidence of appointments in the form of medical appointment cards or letters.

**Medical Evidence:**

When pupils have a high incidence of absence, parents may be requested to provide medical evidence to support the absence. If medical evidence has been requested and that evidence has not been provided by the parent, the absence **will be unauthorised** by school.

Acceptable medical evidence can be:

- Sight of prescription medicine or prescription counterpart (copy on right of prescription)
- Signed and dated medical appointment card
- A copy of an Orthodontist's or hospital letter
- A care of the chemist note

Where children miss out on education without permission the Local Authority is required by law to take appropriate action. Please help us to support you by giving school as much information about any known absence or medical condition that could adversely affect attendance.

**Pupils educated off site**

Broad Oak is responsible for monitoring the attendance of pupil's who are educated offsite by close liaison with the offsite education provider. Pupils will be marked with the appropriate registration code to explain the education provision being accessed.

### **Leave of Absence in Term Time (including holidays):**

*The Headteacher will consider applications for 'leave of absence' during term time in 'exceptional circumstances'. School cannot authorise time off for family holidays and Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays.*

Parents must apply for leave of absence in writing using a 'Leave of Absence Request Form' (available from the main office) and must attach any evidence for the school to take into consideration. The application must be submitted well in advance of the absence. The form should be returned to the school office.

The Headteacher or delegated lead will decide if the leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision.

**If the Headteacher or delegated lead does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents decide to take the leave anyway, the absence will be unauthorised.**

Leave of absence cannot be authorised retrospectively. If a child is removed from school for a period of leave of absence without the school being informed the absence will be automatically unauthorised.

Parents who are thinking of booking a family holiday **must check** with school when the school holiday dates are **before the holiday is booked**.

**Unauthorised holidays during term time may lead to Penalty Notice fines. Penalty Notice Fines can be issued to each parent for every child concerned.**

### **Penalty Notices**

The school follows the Local Authority Code of Conduct for penalty notices. Penalty notices are fines of £60 payable up to 21 days from the penalty notice, and then £120 thereafter. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. More information on penalty notice fines can be found at:

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/schools-education/education-welfare-service/legal-sanctions-for-unauthorised-school-absence>

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

The law states that a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter/message authorises the absence.

**Examples of absences from school that would be authorised (providing evidence may be necessary):**

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

**Absences from school that will NOT be authorised are:**

- Shopping trips
- Birthdays
- Family holidays not agreed by school
- Family celebrations not agreed prior to the event

### **Safeguarding and Attendance**

School considers safeguarding of all its students as one of its critical roles. Completion of registers and initiating first day response procedures for unexplained absence in timely manner is a priority to ensure students' whereabouts are known on a daily basis. To ensure that pupils remain on the premises during the day and to safeguard our most vulnerable pupils this school expects that 'lesson monitor' registers are completed by teaching staff at the start of every lesson. This enables school to spot students who may be at risk or, may be avoiding certain lessons and take steps to locate or safeguard them as soon as possible.

### **Children Missing from Education (CME)**

#### **When a pupil leaves with notice the school will:**

- Agree with parent the last day the pupil will be attending the school.
- Request current telephone numbers, e-mail and addresses.
- Ask if the pupil has been allocated a place at a new school and if so collect the details.
- If a new school has been allocated contact the school to agree the date the pupil will be starting.
- If it cannot be established that the pupil will be attending the named / any school, follow the LA CME procedure.

#### **Where a pupil leaves without advance notice or their destination is unknown, the school will investigate the whereabouts of the child by:**

- Checking possible whereabouts with staff
- Contacting parents by telephone and e-mail
- Contacting emergency contacts held for the pupil
- Making a home visit to the last known address
- Checking if neighbours and friends are aware of the pupil's whereabouts
- Contacting any other agencies known to be involved with the child including; named Social workers SEND services etc.
- Contact the last known school of any siblings
- Check any social media sites e.g. Facebook.

If the pupil is still not located after 10 consecutive school days, school will refer to the LA Children Missing Education Officer. If significant safeguarding issues are raised regarding the missing pupil school will also make a referral to the Safeguarding Contact Centre. This will enable the LA to make further enquires, as appropriate, to try and locate the pupil. School may also inform the Police.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that schools are expected to make reasonable enquires to find the whereabouts of a missing pupil.

## Whole School Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

1. A whole school attendance assembly will be held each Friday to celebrate classes with good attendance. The top ten classes will be revealed in a countdown. The top three classes will receive a trophy at the front of the hall, with the top attending class winning own clothes for the following Friday. The assembly is designed to be fun and competitive, with an emphasis on celebrating the good attendance.
2. School will monitor poor attendance regularly. Families on below 90% after the first half term will be invited for a meeting to discuss attendance issues with attendance lead and pastoral staff. Attendance will then be monitored for 4 weeks. If no improvement is recorded, EWO will be informed.
3. Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice. A list of daily absences will be passed to phase SLT members who may make phone calls to parents to find out reasons for absence in more detail.
4. The school employs the services of a Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to support the school in meeting its legal obligations with regard to school attendance. The EWO will investigate all arising attendance issues in accordance with current government guidance and legislation.
5. Attendance letters will be prepared and sent home by the EWO each half term outlining the attendance band of each child. Gold and amber letters will be given to each child at the end of each half term, while red letters will be sent home through the post.
6. Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 95% may be invited to agree an attendance action plan OR a Parenting Contract with the EWO and the school to help improve their child's attendance; this may include supportive referrals to the school nurse or a parenting course.
7. A pupil with an attendance of 90% or below is categorised by the government as **Persistent Absentee (PA)**. The government does not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence with pupils falling into this category. All PA pupils will be targeted for improvement by the EWO and the school. Parents of PA's with a high incidence of unauthorised absence may be the subjects of legal sanctions including **Penalty Notices OR Prosecutions in the Magistrates Court**.
8. The school will support Pupils who are absent through long term chronic or life threatening illness by adhering to current government guidance for children with medical needs, this may involve a plan of support with home tuition and a re-integration plan back into school.
9. Teachers and support staff who become aware of issues which may lead to attendance difficulties will report the issue firstly on CPOMS, to the attendance lead or the Headteacher.
10. When appropriate school will liaise with other agencies – Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service, Social Services, the School Nurse and other agencies to support and help pupils with attendance difficulties.

11. The Head Teacher will report to the school's governing body termly on attendance matters.

### **Legislation links**

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff'.

This attendance policy adheres to current government legislation and guidance. For further information please refer to: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

### **Other relevant government guidance**

- Parental Responsibility Measures for school attendance and behaviour
- Children Missing Education