

Beaconhill Primary School Attendance Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1. This policy will come into effect on 8th February 2023.

1.2. This policy is in support of Section 7 of the Education Act (1996) which states that:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he/she may have'.

Beaconhill Primary School is therefore committed to encouraging excellent attendance for all pupils to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

2. Responsible Party

2.1. Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term time. Parents should promote good attendance and ensure that their child attends school every day.

2.2. Staff, including teachers and support staff, are responsible for the implementation of this policy fairly and consistently across all pupils. Staff should model good attendance.

2.3. The Attendance Officer and Headteacher are responsible for the management of this policy, including distributing procedures to staff and parents/carers. They will use their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions regarding potential welfare involvement.

2.4. The governing body has overall responsibility for the Attendance Policy at Beaconhill Primary School.

3. Definitions

3.1. Authorised absence:

3.1.1. An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.

3.1.2. Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave

3.1.3. Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave

3.1.4. An absence due to a family emergency or bereavement

3.1.5. An absence which is an 'exceptional' circumstance; this is granted entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher

3.2. Unauthorised absences may include the following but are not restricted to:

3.2.1. Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason

3.2.2. Truancy during the school day

3.2.3. Absences which have never been properly explained

3.2.4. Arrival at school after the register has closed

3.2.5. Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays

3.2.6. Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed by the school

3.2.7. Any absence which the school has reasonable cause to suspect may not be a 'genuine absence'; it is solely up to the school to decide whether to record an absence as authorised or unauthorised

3.3. Persistent absenteeism:

3.3.1. Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason (authorised or unauthorised)

4. Absence Procedures

4.1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence. Parents may call into school to give an explanation of why their child is absent. The register closes at 09:20 each morning. Parents must inform school of an absence by 09:15 at the latest.

4.2. A message will be sent to the parent of any child who has not reported a reason for their child's absence on the first day they do not attend school. Messages will be sent via School Gateway / text message to the parent(s) listed as priority one on their child's contact record. Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details for this purpose and must notify school if these details change.

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4.3. Where parents fail to respond to this message, and there is due concern, this may be followed up with a phone call to the priority one parent(s) and other emergency contacts. A home visit may also be deemed appropriate.

4.4. Where absences are a cause for concern, e.g. persistent absences, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the Headteacher or Attendance Officer

4.5. The school will inform the Local Authority (LA) of the details of any pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 or more school days without Permission.

4.6. If a pupil's attendance causes a concern, the Attendance Officer and/or Headteacher, will arrange a formal meeting with parents. If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the Attendance Officer may instruct the LA to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents.

4.7. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, and the school and LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register.

5. Attendance Register

5.1. Designated staff members will take the attendance register each day at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Completion of the register is a statutory requirement and staff taking the register must take due care to ensure it is accurate in the interest of safeguarding. Completed registers must be taken to the school office at the earliest opportunity and no later than 09:10. The register closes at 09:20.

5.2. The register will record whether pupils are present or absent using the national attendance codes to ensure absences are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. Explanatory notes will be added where appropriate.

6. Punctuality

6.1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.

6.2. The school day starts at the following times:

6.2.1. Reception to Year 4 - 08.45 - 08:55am ('soft' start)

Year 5 and Year 6 - 08.45am

6.2.2. Nursery 09:00am

6.3. Any children arriving after the start of the school day will be deemed late. Parents must bring late children into school via the main office, sign their children into school and give a reason for their lateness.

6.4. Persistent lateness will be monitored by the Attendance Officer and referrals made to the Education Welfare Officer.

7. Appointments

7.1. As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

7.2. Where this is not possible, an appointment card should be shown to the school Office.

7.3. Where an appointment falls unavoidably during the school day, pupils should attend before and after their appointment.

8. Leave Requests During Term Time

8.1. There is no automatic right to take a child out of school during term time. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

8.2. Any parent wishing to remove their child from school during term time for any reason should complete a leave of absence form which is available at the school office. This should be completed two weeks in advance of the leave wherever possible.

8.3. Leave requests during term time will then be assessed on a case by case basis by the Headteacher and may only be granted at the Headteacher's discretion and where there are deemed to be exceptional circumstances.

8.4. Parents will be notified of the outcome of their requested leave via a letter home.

8.5. Leave may be granted for religious observances where this has been requested in advance and agreed by the Headteacher.

8.6. Leave may be granted for sporting or musical activities including where a licence

for the activity has been issued by the LA where this has been requested in advance and agreed by the Headteacher.

8.7. Leave will not be granted for persistent absentees under any circumstances.

9. Penalty Notices

9.1. If parent(s) take their child out of school during term time without prior authorisation from the Headteacher, Beaconhill Primary School can follow Northumberland LA's procedures with regard to issuing a Penalty Notice.

9.2. A Penalty Notice will only be issued where 10 or more consecutive sessions (five days) of unauthorised holiday absence have been taken.

9.3. The Penalty Notice will be issued by the LA to both parents per family and will be applied to the parent who has taken their child out of school. Where an application for leave has been completed, the fine will be applied.

9.4. The Penalty Notice is a fine for £60.00 per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days and £120.00 per child if paid after this date but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the LA starting legal proceedings against parents for the offence of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

10. Additional Authority

10.1. This policy has due regard for the following legislation:

10.1.1. Education Act 1996

10.1.2. Equality Act 2010

10.1.3. Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

10.1.4. Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

10.1.5. Children and Young Persons Act 1963

10.1.6. Department for Education (2018) 'School attendance'

10.1.7. Department for Education (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'

10.1.8. Department for Education (2022) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'

10.1.9. Department for Education (2016) 'Children missing in education'

10.2. This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

10.2.1. Complaints Policy

Issue Date	February 2023
Review Cycle	Biannual
Last Review	September 2023
Next Review	February 2025
Lead Author	Joel Routledge, Maxine Thompson and Barry Laurie

Appendix 1

Letters begin to be sent out from the first day of Autumn 2. Any child with attendance below 85% at this point will receive L1. From the first day of Spring 1, any child with attendance below 90% will receive L1. This is to allow enough days to pass to make absences statistically significant e.g. a week of illness during the first half-term could theoretically equate to 85% attendance whereas a week of illness over the course of a full term would 93%.