



# Bromley Hills Primary School Attendance Policy

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Review 2:	
Review 3:	



## Attendance Policy

### Rationale

At Bromley Hills we recognise that regular attendance at school is crucial in raising standards of education and in ensuring every child can meet their full potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Therefore, we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

### The Government expects:

Schools and Local Authorities to:

- Reduce absence including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Act early to address any patterns of absence;
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend early and ensure that all pupils are punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly.

(Department for Education – Advice on School Attendance ([www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)))

### What the law says about School Attendance:

All children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a full-time education. Section 444 (1a) of the Education Act 1966 says: "If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, without reasonable justification, then his/her parent is guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted".

Children are required to attend school for 190 days (380 sessions) in any single academic year (September-July). The school expects all children to attend every day that the school is open and on time for registration. Absence that falls below 90% is categorised by the Government as persistent absence.

Only the school can approve absence. The school does not authorise absence without good reason and is not bound to accept the reason presented.



## **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' (March 2013):

- 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.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Therefore, a member of staff will carry out a home visit if there is a concern about safeguarding.

## **Parents / Carers must:**

- Ensure that their child is able to attend school for the whole academic year by ensuring their child attends school unless there is a reason for the absence which has been approved by the school. Medical appointments must be made out of school time wherever possible.

## **If a parent or carer considers their child has an illness which may warrant them remaining at home then they must:**

- Consider first of all whether they feel that their child would still be able to take part in the majority, if not all, of the school's activities. In this case, they should still send their child to school. Should the child become unwell during the day and/or if the school feels that they are no longer able to participate in school activities, the school will contact parents to collect their child.
- If parents feel that their child cannot take part in the school's activities and would be better remaining at home then they must contact the school as soon as possible on the first and any subsequent days of absence before 9:30 am. Failure to do so constitutes a breach of this policy. The person ringing will be asked to identify themselves and clearly give the reason for the absence. This information will be recorded.

## **If a child has a medical appointment then parents/carers must:**

- Contact the school prior to the appointment to ask for approved arrangements for the child to be collected/returned to school as close to the appointment time as possible. If the school has concerns about the child's attendance, a copy of the appointment time/letter may be requested.



### **If parents/carers know their child will be late for school they must:**

- Contact the school as soon as possible to tell them that the child will arrive late and make every effort to get the child to school as soon as possible.

### **If parents/carers are having difficulty getting their child to attend school they must:**

- Notify the school immediately (school office, class teacher, Head Teacher) about the concerns. The school will make every effort to meet with parents and attempt to rectify the problem.

### **The School must:**

- Keep regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance registers. These are completed at the beginning of each morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session.
- Ensure that parents/carers are aware of the times for the beginning of each session, school term dates and other INSET days when a pupil is not expected to attend school.
- Notify the parents of any immediate school closure e.g. due to bad weather.
- Respond to requests for attendance data from the Education Investigation Service, Local Authority, Department for Education, OFSTED.
- Attendance figures for the year will be given on each child's school report at the end of the Summer Term. This includes a breakdown of authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Present attendance data regularly to the Governing Body and parents.
- Notify parents as early as possible where their child's attendance is a cause for concern.
- Notify the Education Investigation Service of individual children whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Work alongside parents to improve attendance.

### **The Pupil must:**

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time and be appropriately dressed and prepared for the school day.

## **Definitions**

### **Authorised absence**

- *An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.*
- *Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.*



## Unauthorised absence

- *An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.*
- *Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.*

## Implementation of Policy

### ***Procedure to follow if a child is absent***

1. When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will contact a parent or guardian on the first day of absence.
2. The school administrator checks the registers every Friday and sends home letters to parents of children who have been late or have unexplained absence with a reply slip attached for them to state a reason. If the problem persists the headteacher will request a meeting.
3. When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
4. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.
5. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

## Requests for leave of absence

### Penalty Fines

**Leave of absence** – Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 a Headteacher MAY NOT authorise a leave of absence in term time for a holiday. A headteacher may authorise absence for exceptional circumstances. An application for a leave of absence must be made in writing to the school no later than 15 days before the proposed leave is due to take place.

If you take a leave of absence which **is not authorised** by the school **you may be issued with a fixed penalty fine** via the Education Investigation Service. A penalty fine can also be issued for:

- Unauthorised absence from school;
- Being identified out of school on a truancy sweep.

**Exclusion** – If your child is excluded from school and during the first six days of exclusion, and he or she is identified in a public place **you may be issued with a fixed penalty fine** via the Education Investigation Service. Details of fines can be found on the Education Investigation Service website.



## **Parenting orders**

Parenting orders may be issued by magistrates following the conviction of parents or carers or on the application of the local authority for failing to send their child to school regularly. As part of the parenting order, you will be required to:

- fulfill certain tasks such as taking your child to school each day;
- attend parenting guidance sessions.

If you fail to do this, you will be in breach of a court order. This matter will return to court and further fines could be imposed.

## ***Prosecution***

If you fail to meet all of the above, you may be prosecuted. This could result in each parent or carer receiving a fine of up to £2,500 and / or three months imprisonment for failing to ensure your child regularly attends school.

## **Long-term absence**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

## **Rewards for good attendance**

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.



## **Lateness**

The school opens at 8.45am so that the school day begins with the children ready to work in the classroom at 8.55 am and the afternoon session begins at 1pm for Reception and Key Stage 1, 1.15 pm for children in Years 3&4 and 1.30pm for Years 5&6. A child who arrives after this time but before the registers closes will be marked 'late' and must sign in at the office. Registers close 30 minutes after the start of the morning session and 5 minutes after the start of the afternoon session. Children arriving after the close of the registers are coded as 'unauthorised late'. A child who is persistently late (five times within the academic year) may lose the privilege to be coded as 'late' and will instead be marked as 'unauthorised late'. The Head Teacher will notify the parent of this decision in writing.

## **Absence due to Illness**

Children who are genuinely poorly are not expected to attend school and an authorised code will be used. However, where the child's repeated absence due to illness is becoming a concern and reaches 7 days in any school year the school may request evidence to inform a decision to authorise any further absence. The Head Teacher may ask the parent to provide information to demonstrate that the child is too unwell to return/attend school e.g. prescriptions, appointment cards/letters.

The Head Teacher may decide to remove the right to the authorised absence due to illness and record any absence as 'unauthorised'. The Head Teacher will notify the parent of this decision in writing. In order to avoid this, it is essential that parents inform the school of any health concerns that may be affecting their child's ability to attend school regularly.

## **School Closures**

The academic year is 190 days. Schools are also required to have an additional 5 days that are used for staff training; often called INSET (In Service Training) Days. These days are not part of the 190 days which is every child's free entitlement and schools endeavour to schedule these to minimise inconvenience to parents and carers.

The Head Teacher will make every effort to ensure that the school remains open for 190 days. However, in some circumstances, the school may have to close. The Head Teacher must always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person who uses the school site, pupils, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors. If at any point, to use the school building would be detrimental to a person or persons' health, safety and welfare, then the Head Teacher must close part or all of the school.

If a decision is made to close part or all of the school, the Head Teacher will endeavour to inform parents of that decision and the details of any arrangements that have been put in place. If the Head Teacher decides to close part or all of the school, then the register for those pupils affected is closed for the day and coded as an enforced school closure. This does not affect a child's attendance record.

Parents should always assume that the school will remain open during term time unless they hear otherwise.



## **Education Investigation Service (EIS)**

Where a situation cannot be resolved the case will be referred to the Education Investigation Service. The Education Investigation Service can issue a penalty notice or instigate legal proceedings to prosecute parents or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child and a Parenting Order for the parent/guardian.

Referrals can be made if:

- There is an accumulation of a minimum of 10% unauthorised absence in any time period.
- A holiday in term time has been refused.
- There are 12 sessions of absence in the last 6 weeks.
- Re referral if a further 12 sessions are missed.
- If a child has stopped attending and we do not know their whereabouts. (See Children Missing Education below).

Parents may wish to contact the Education Investigation Service themselves to ask for help or information. This service is independent of school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the School Office or by contacting the Local Education Authority Helpline: 01384 814317 (Duty Officer)

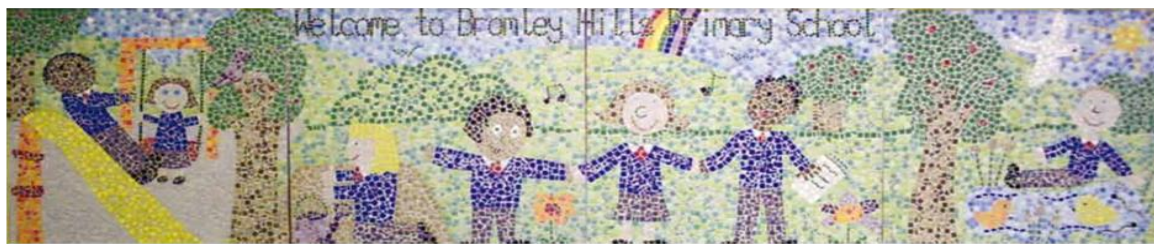
Investigation Service:  
Education Investigation Service  
Westox House  
1 Trinity Road  
Dudley  
West Midlands  
DY1 1JQ  
01384 814317

## **Children Missing Education**

If a child does not arrive in school the following steps will be taken:

- A telephone call is made to the home address.
- If the child is absent for a second day and we have no contact with parents a 2 day contact letter is taken to the house (or posted).
- If such contacts do not receive a response other named contacts will be contacted and a visit made to the house (if not made at an earlier stage).
- After 10 consecutive days missed the child is referred to the Education Investigation Service as a child missing Education.
- If the child is on a child protection plan they will be referred sooner.
- If the child is considered to be at risk child protection procedures will be followed.
- The EIS will agree a date for the child to be removed from roll – Bromley Hills do not off roll until satisfied by contact with EIS, another authority etc that the child is safe.
- School will continue its own investigations where possible.





## **Children moving schools**

If a parent indicates that their child is leaving the school they will be requested to complete a form stating their new address, school etc. (This is in addition to the LEA transfer form for moves within borough.) The forwarding details forms are supplied to Foundation Stage and the school office.

Office staff contact the nominated school re UPN, start date, removal from our roll.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- Mr Jon Stevens (Headteacher);
- Mrs Daksha Patel (Attendance Assistant);
- Ranuka Jagpal (Chair of Governors with responsibility for attendance).

## **'Wise Up' Programme**

Parents can track their child's attendance figures throughout the year. Wise Up attendance reports will be sent out at the beginning of the Spring, Summer and Autumn Terms. Attendance on these reports is banded to indicate if it is satisfactory or not. The bands are as follows:

- Gold 97% +
- Silver 95-97%
- Bronze 93-95%
- Red 90-93%
- Wise Up Below 90%

Children receive badges or awards for achieving Bronze, Silver or Gold levels. Sending out the reports and making the awards at the start of a term/year is to make sure everyone has attendance fresh in their minds on their return to school.

Attendance figures for the year will be given on the child's school report at the end of the Summer Term and this includes an authorised/unauthorised breakdown.

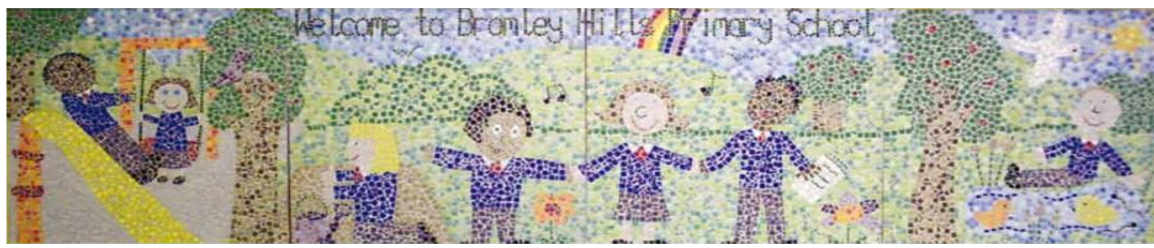
## **September Reminder**

Parents of children with an attendance below 90% during a school year will be contacted by letter at the start of the new school year. Progress will be tracked throughout the year.

## **Problems with attendance**

School has a legal duty to promote attendance and to publish its absence figures to parents. Equally parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend school.

The attendance policy is available for parents on the website or by asking at the school office for a paper copy.



## **Irregular Attendance**

Irregular attendance and patterns of absence are monitored weekly. Attendance below 90% are targeted, as well as patterns of absence. School staff issue letters to inform parents if attendance is causing concern.

School staff may visit the home of children whose attendance is being monitored. Parents may also be invited into school to discuss attendance matters. School may request that medical evidence is produced to evidence a child's absence.

## **Improving Attendance Levels**

School staff are committed to working with children and parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Strategies to encourage good attendance are:

- Wise Up – 5 attendance categories. Red & Wise Up level. Bronze (93-94.9%), Silver (95-96.9%), Gold (97-100%). Certificates & badges awarded 3 times each year. Gold achievers displayed in class.
- 100% attendance for a term and for the whole year- certificate and prize.
- Every half term a group of children (Year 1 & any children new to the school with attendance issues) will have their attendance tracked. Those reaching their attendance target will receive a prize.
- Class of the week certificate – presented in assembly together with an attendance trophy.
- Half term class champions attendance cup – presented in assembly.
- Class of the Year certificate and special trip at the end of the Summer term for those with 100% attendance.
- Attendance notice board with school target and figure achieved.
- Class Attendance charts showing weekly percentage and an up/down arrow in designated class attendance area.

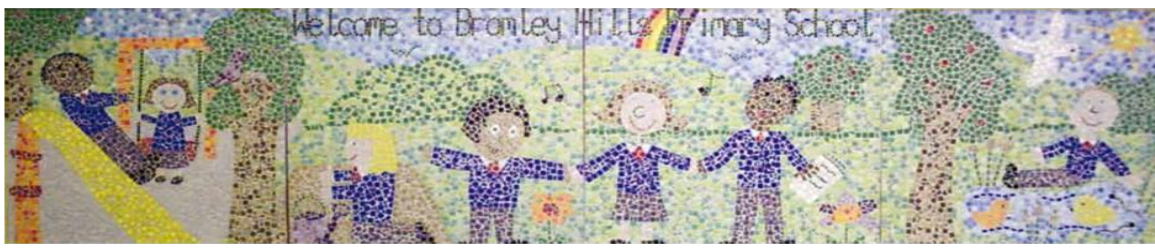
## **Guidance on Infection Control in Schools – Public Health Agency**

A decision about a child's absence will be based on the information given to schools by the Public Health Agency. (See Public Health Agency guidance). A copy of this will be available on the school's website.

## **Attendance Targets**

Each year the school sets targets and monitors success against these targets.

In 2015/16 our attendance was 95.8% and we have a target of 97% for this academic year (2016/17)



## **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.