

BRADWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy for Promoting Good Attendance & Punctuality



**Reviewed November 16
(AW_11/16)**

Why do we need a policy for attendance and punctuality?

Children come to school to learn and good attendance is important if they are to gain as much as possible from their time in school. When children miss lessons it is harder for them to reach their full potential. Poor attendance and punctuality can lead to children feeling unsettled at school, it can affect their friendships and reduce their confidence. Poor attendance can result in social and academic problems.

Punctuality is important so children can be registered, seated and listening to the teacher when the first lesson of the day begins.

It is the duty of the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. This duty is to ensure that all children receive full time education.

Punctuality

Our school day officially begins at 8.50am when all children are expected to be in school, unless they have an authorised absence pass. The school gates are closed at 9.00am for safety reasons. Any children arriving after that time will need to enter at the main entrance and report to the office where they will be given a late mark on the register. Children arriving after 9.30am who have not been issued with a pass will be marked as late after close of register. This will show as an unauthorised absence for the morning on the register.

Punctuality procedures

- The DSL and office monitor lateness.
- Late arrivals are entered in the register and an arrival time is entered on our computerised attendance system.
- A letter is sent home for persistent lateness.
- Parents will be contacted to discuss any problem which may contribute to a lack of punctuality.
- A referral may be sent to MAST (Multi Agency Support Team) if necessary.
- Punctuality when collecting children at the end of the school day is just as important. If a parent/carer is running late school should be notified by telephone if at all possible, so that the child/children can be collected. If the school is not notified the office will try to contact the parent/carer. If no contact can be made and the child/children are still in school one hour after the end of school the relevant Children's Social Care Area Team or the Police will be contacted.
- Half-termly meetings held with the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion officer to monitor and/or address attendance concerns

The school day finishes at the following times:

FS2/KS1/KS2 3.05pm

Registers

Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning (8.45am) and the afternoon (1.00pm for KS1, 1:10pm for KS2) sessions. The morning registers close at 9.15am.

Absence

Parents/carers are requested to telephone school on the first day of absence to explain why their child is not in school. The appropriate code may then be entered in the attendance register. If a parent/carer fails to notify the school the attendance officer will phone them. This is known as 'First Day' absence calling. If no explanation is received then the office will call home to check why the child is absent. If we get no reply a letter will be sent home requesting a reason and this will be kept on file. If no explanation remains forthcoming then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents of children whose attendance falls below 90% will have to provide medical evidence before the illness can be authorised.

Authorised/unauthorised absence

It is important to note that a letter or phone call from a parent does not authorise an absence, only the schools acceptance of the explanation can authorise the absence.

Absences from Bradway Primary School will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Days of religious observance (3 per year)
- Exceptional circumstances (agreed by the Head teacher)
- Medical/dental appointment*
- Pre-arranged visits to another school*
- Music exam*

*Absence passes are available at the school office and should be carried when out of school for appointments. The school office may ask to see evidence of medical appointments.

It is expected that:

Parents will -

- Ensure their child attends regularly and on time
- Notify school on the first day of absence
- Only request leave in term time in exceptional circumstances
- Not keep their children away from school for trivial reasons
- Not keep their children off school during SAT's or at times of testing.

The school will –

- Ensure that the Head Teacher is informed about any attendance matters and is in agreement with any action taken
- Have an expectation that full time punctual attendance will be the norm and all persistent absences/lateness will be followed up
- Monitor attendance through checking registers and the computerised attendance system
- Have a system of pupil passes for legitimate time out of school due to unavoidable appointments
- Identify and act upon problems with attendance.

Monitoring

The registers are monitored on a regular basis by the school's DSL. Attendance patterns are monitored weekly and attendance records of any child with an attendance of less than 90% will be discussed with the Head Teacher, who may wish to discuss the problem with the child's parents/carers. The school will also alert parents if a child's attendance is below the 90% mark by the use of attendance information/alert certificates which highlight areas of absence that are felt could be improved on.

Information on attendance is returned half termly to the DFE.

Attendance procedures

If a poor pattern of attendance is formed:

- The Head Teacher will be informed
- The DSL/teacher will contact parents/carers
- The DSL will look at strategies for improvement
- The Head Teacher/Attendance Officer may wish to meet with parents/carers to discuss and agree strategies for improved attendance
- The school may contact MAST (Multi Agency Support Team) to request the allocation of a Family Intervention Worker.
- The Family Intervention Worker will keep in contact with parents/carers, if necessary sending a warning letter
- The Family Intervention Worker may issue a final warning
- Parents/carers may receive a court summons.

Penalty Notices

Where a child's attendance is consistently poor (less than 90% with at least 20% of the absence being unauthorised) and all steps have been taken to rectify this but have been unsuccessful, then the Attendance and Inclusion Service will after consulting with the school, consider issuing a Penalty Notice (see appendix). This will only be issued after taking each case into consideration and taking into account any mitigating circumstances.

Awards and rewards

The class in each keystage phase with the highest attendance each half term will be awarded an attendance trophy and children also receive stickers and small prizes of pens, pencils etc. for positive and improved attendance.

Leave during term time

Leave in term time is **not an entitlement** and can only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the Head Teacher's discretion.

All requests for term time leave must be submitted at least 20 days in advance, by the parents/carers, to enable school to have time to consider the request. Each request will be considered individually and on its own merits. The school will reply in writing within 10 school days of receiving the request. Requests that do not include a start and end date or reason for the leave cannot be considered. If a child is granted leave and does not return to school by the agreed return date or takes unauthorised leave, parents will be at risk of receiving a fine and/or the child losing their place at school.

Taking leave in term time is strongly discouraged, 'as it is disruptive to children's education and there is strong evidence to indicate that significant absence from school during term time can have a negative impact upon a child's attainment and learning'.

CYPF Policy

For further information on term time leave please refer to:

Sheffield City Council

Children Young People and Families

Term time leave: Policy for schools

A copy of which is available by request from the school office.

Children missing from education

The DSL will liaise with the Children Young People and Families Directorate, Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered as missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and they will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

Children in public care

The DSL is the school's co-ordinator for looked after children.

The DSL will monitor their attendance and report this to the

Looked After Children's Team on request.

Appendix: Penalty Notices

The Local Education Authority has brought to the attention of every school in Sheffield the new powers made available in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

These came into force in February 2004 and include Penalty Notices, which mean that for pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e. any absences for which the school has not given permission) their parents/carers may be subject to a prompt fine.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absence developing. They will be issued simply by post to a pupil's home after a warning and in cases of absence without acceptable cause (including those caught on truancy sweeps and taking unauthorised holidays in school time).

At Bradway Primary School we consider that regular attendance is very important and these new powers so significant, that we are bringing this change in the law to the attention of every parent/carer with a child in this school. It means that any parent/carer of a pupil with a level of unauthorised absence may now have a potential liability in the form of a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence record from school may leave you liable to receive a Penalty Notice it is extremely important that you take action without delay to secure their regular attendance.

When considering the use of a Penalty Notice, a Sheffield Local Authority Officer's first response will be in the form of a written warning. In exceptional circumstances, however, a Penalty Notice may be used as a first response. This could be when an unauthorised absence was for an extended period and condoned by the parent/carer, for example when a parent/carer has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this or if you need any help to achieve an improvement then please contact us to discuss the situation.

Advice and support can also be made available to you through the Attendance and Inclusion Service by contacting 0114 2735701.