



# Brampton Village Primary School

## Attendance Policy

Date Agreed	March 2019
Date of Review	March 2021

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY INCLUDING POLICY ON UNREPORTED ABSENCE**

The School expects attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

### **SECTION 1: Attendance**

#### **1. Statement of Intent**

- (a) The school aims to work together with parents to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually.
- (b) The School expects attendance at school to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

#### **2. Parents' Responsibilities**

- (a) Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- (b) Parents should ensure that if their child is to be absent from school for any unavoidable reason such as sickness they should contact the school as soon as possible, preferably before 9.15am on each day of their child's absence. This may be done by phone, by letter or in person.
- (c) Parents may not authorise their child's absence – only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. (Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.)
- (d) If their child is absent either due to illness or due to an unauthorised absence, they must not attend any event during the school day or on the evening of the day of absence. Should a child have sickness or diarrhoea they must not return to school within 48 hours of the last bout of illness.
- (e) Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school in time for the start of registration. If a child is late his/her parent should report directly to the school office.
- (f) Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term-time. Parents do not have any right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term-time holiday, and schools will not as a rule authorise leave for such holidays.
- (g) Schools will only authorise leave for term-time holidays in exceptional circumstances and will look at each request individually.
- (h) Schools will not authorise leave near or during exam or test times, if it coincides with the start of the school year or if the school otherwise believes that it may have a harmful effect on the child's education.
- (i) We strongly encourage parents to avoid, wherever possible, making medical and dental appointments during school time.
- (j) Parents should recognise the importance of regular, uninterrupted school attendance and should avoid booking family holidays during term-time. If this is absolutely unavoidable they should fill in an authorised absence request form and personally deliver to the School Office in advance of the period for which leave is to be requested. (Parents should not expect leave of absence to be granted automatically.) See appendix 1.

### 3. School Responsibilities

- (a) The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
- (b) Registers will be called twice daily. Any child arriving after the closing of the register will be recorded as 'late' for that session.
- (c) Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance contained in the staff handbook. Administrative Staff will inspect registers each day in order to ensure that these are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.
- (d) Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality they should speak to the Headteacher.
- (e) If a child is absent the class teacher will enter the appropriate code in the register. If no explanation has been received from the child's parent school staff will endeavour to make contact with the parent. If this proves impossible the matter will be referred to the Headteacher.
- (f) All absence notes from parents should be dated and initialled by the class teacher and stored at the back of the register in preparation for filing in the LA folders by the Administrative Staff. Only notes concerning absences about which there are concerns/queries should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher who may then decide to speak to the parents concerned.
- (g) Administrative Staff will regularly collect attendance data for the Headteacher who will use this data during meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer.
- (h) The school will employ a number of strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance:
  - The Headteacher and class teachers will communicate regularly with parents on attendance matters.
  - Appropriate personal encouragement will be offered to individual children and their parents.
  - Clear attendance information will be entered in the school brochure.
  - Letters will be sent to parents if the class teacher notices that the child is frequently entering the classroom after 9am but before the register has been sent to the Office .
  - Headteacher will report on attendance to Governors in the termly Head's Report.

#### SECTION 2: Absence

Absence of children from school falls into two categories, authorised and unauthorised.

**Authorised absence** is recorded when children are:

prevented from attending by sickness;  
prevented from attending by unavoidable causes (including the non-availability of LA provided transport);  
given permission by the Headteacher to miss school following the submission of a request for special leave of absence;

**Unauthorised absence** is recorded when:

children arrive at school after the register closes at 9.25am and the absence cannot be authorised as above;  
there is no notification from a parent or carer as to the reason for absence;  
the Headteacher has been unable to authorise a request due to the circumstances described below.

Letter to parents:

# HUNTS AREA PRIMARY PARTNERSHIP

## ATTENDANCE

Dear Parents/Carers,

As Head teachers serving in local schools we felt it appropriate to write to you regarding the authorisation of Leave of Absence.

As you will be aware from correspondence from individual schools, we are all required to implement Cambridgeshire County Council's policy on Leave of Absence. The 2013 School Attendance Penalty Notice amendment means that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Authorised absences include sickness, medical appointments and other approved activities.

To help us achieve consistency of approach all cluster schools have agreed that their school policy will fully adhere to County Policy, which means that requests for leave of absence will only be approved in very exceptional circumstances. **All schools expect attendance to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence, which would then be authorised.**

The fact that a holiday is cheaper in term time will not be considered to be an 'exceptional circumstance', nor will parents' working circumstances. No absences will be granted or authorised during SATs or exam periods. All requests should be made in writing to the Head teacher and will be considered on an individual basis but the most important factor is the effect an absence would have on your child's education. If we do agree to an absence in term time it is very important that your child comes back to school promptly.

We cannot prevent you from withdrawing your child from school, but if the absence is not authorised, it will be recorded as 'unauthorised' in the school register and you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice being issued. If we believe that the leave has been taken without any formal request to school we reserve the right to challenge this by writing to you and allowing 7 days for you to prove otherwise. Should we get no response this will be recorded as unauthorised leave of absence.

**The school and Educational Welfare Service may issue a fixed penalty fine of £60 per parent per child if you make the decision to take your child out of school even though permission has not been granted.**

**If your child's attendance is less than 90% they are deemed to have 'Persistent Absence' and the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice or consider legal action.**

*The school requires your child to attend regularly and we aim to support you to achieve this. If you have any issues with your child's school attendance we would encourage you to discuss this with your child's teacher, school support member of staff or the Head Teacher who can offer support to ensure good school attendance preventing the need for any Local Authority intervention as outlined above.*

We hope you understand and appreciate our position and that you will support us by not requesting leave unless it is absolutely unavoidable and in line with the above criteria. We are looking to maintain the strong relationship that we have with parents and wish to work with you on this issue.

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. All schools expect attendance to be 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. Headteachers will consider applications on an individual basis, with the most important factor being the effect of an absence on your child's education. Permission must be sought in advance. You are advised not to make arrangements until your request has been considered by the school.

Please read the guidance overleaf with regard to the circumstances under which absence might be authorised and the penalties which may be levied should you remove you child from school without authorisation having been granted.

**To: The Headteacher, Brampton Village Primary School**

I wish to have an absence of ..... days authorised due to exceptional circumstances, for:

Child's Name ..... Class .....

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s).....

First day of absence..... Last day of absence .....

**Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. *Before completing this section please read the guidance overleaf.* Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.**

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Date

### Office use only

Date form received	No. of school days absence requested	Current % attendance	Attendance code	Date entered onto SIMS

Signature of Headteacher

Date

# ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL IN TERM-TIME

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special needs. **School attendance is expected to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence**, which would then be authorised.

Examples of unavoidable absence from school are:

- Genuine illness
- Medical or dental appointment where an appointment could not be secured outside school hours. Evidence of appointments should be provided at the request of the school office
- Days of religious observance

Requests for leave of absence will only be approved in very exceptional circumstances.

The fact that a holiday is cheaper in term time will not be considered an exceptional circumstance, nor will parents' working circumstances. No absences will be granted or authorised during SATs. All requests should be made to the Headteacher using this form and will be considered on an individual basis, the main factor being the effect on your child's education. If an absence in term time is authorised, it is important that your child comes back to school promptly.

We cannot prevent you from withdrawing your child from school but if the absence is recorded as unauthorised in the school register you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice being issued. If we believe that leave has been taken without any formal request to the school we reserve the right to challenge this by writing to you and allowing 7 days for you to prove otherwise. Should we get no response this will be recorded as unauthorised leave of absence.

If you have any issues with your child's school attendance please discuss this with your child's teacher, school support staff or the Head Teacher who can offer support to ensure good school attendance without the intervention of the Local Authority.

## Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices may only be served in accordance with the Local Authority's code of conduct. Penalty Notices may be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable. The local authority may also issue a Penalty Notice in relation to a child whose attendance at school is less than 90 over a given period – this is categorised as "Persistent Absence".

The amount of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid after 21 days and before 28 days. Should a parent or carer on whom a notice is served fail to pay the fine in full within the specified time he/she will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates court where on conviction a sentence of a fine up to £2,500 or up to three months in prison may be imposed.