Attendance Policy

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Bentley new village primary school

headteacher: Kirsten Mckechnie

2022

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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| **PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICY:**  **HEADTEACHER AND ATTENDANCE MANAGER** | **LAST UPDATED BY K.McKechnie** |
| **DATE: December 2020** |
| **SIGNED:** K.MCKECHNIE | **ROLE: HEADTEACHER** |
| **TO BE REVIEWED:** | **December 2022** |

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child’s regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

Bentley New Village Primary School aims to have ALL pupils attending regularly and punctually. Parents and Carers need to know and understand that, should their children fail to attend school, then the matter will be referred to the Attendance Manager and Education Welfare Service. All Doncaster schools are operating a prosecution system in cooperation with the Attendance and Welfare Service and that in conjunction with Doncaster Council schools are operating Fixed Penalty Notices for non-attendance.

**OUR SCHOOL VISION**

Together we will create a calm and welcoming learning environment and work together to secure success for all. We will strive to create a safe, caring, supportive and inclusive school in which we will focus on excellent progress within traditional core subjects whilst providing a rich and exciting curriculum.

We believe that our school should equip its pupils with the skills that society and the local community demand and so we will value the skills and learning that children need in order to look after themselves, their families, their health, their mental well-being and their bodies. We will strive to teach the whole child and create life-long learners and pro-active citizens.

All pupils will have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of physical and sporting activity, as part of the curriculum, as an extra-curricular activity and in competition with other schools. Through sport we will promote a love of physical activity, the spirit of fair play and the ability to be a team-player, a coach and a mentor.

We will encourage the development of individual flair, creativity, talent and personality and will always embrace differences and uniqueness. Our school will value a good sense of humour and celebrate the fun that can be had in learning and within our school.

**OUR SCHOOL VALUES**

Determination – Resilience – Tolerance – Cooperation – Creativity – Curiosity

**OUR SCHOOL AIMS**

* To raise the aspirations and life-expectations of each individual within our school so everyone strives for **personal excellence** in everything they do
* To provide outstanding learning and teaching which enables all pupils, regardless of gender, race, background or ability, to excel
* To help pupils and staff build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses through development, mentoring and support
* To help pupils develop respect for others so that they can form tolerant and caring relationships and be sympathetic to the needs of other people, whoever they may be
* To provide pupils with a variety of experiences and the support they need to be healthy and active, to stay safe, to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic well-being
* To use the skills, knowledge, experience and talents of all staff to personalize the learning for each pupil
* To develop a culture of team work that promotes continuous improvement and the highest standards of achievement and conduct
* To be committed to providing a high quality programme of professional development and training.

Our mission statement, **“What Challenges us, Changes us”**

**RATIONALE**

Every child has the right to an education and an excellent education begins with coming to school every day.

At Bentley New Village Primary School, we believe all pupils should value their education and demonstrate this passion through excellent attendance; pupils should rarely miss a day. To succeed and meet their potential, children should not be disadvantaged by low attendance or poor punctuality. It is clear that children who attend well, do well an **example of this of this is that KS2 pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard**. We will constantly strive to ensure that all New Village children receive their full quote of quality teaching each day, during term time.

Our attendance target is 97% or over.

Poor attendance is a safeguarding concern and the school will monitor children’s attendance as part of their rigorous safeguarding systems. This is vital to make sure that children are safe when not in school. As such, the school will treat non-attendance as a serious concern.

**PURPOSE**

To raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school.

* To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance.
* To inform parents of attendance and punctuality issues.
* To identify barriers causing non-attendance and work closely with families and other agencies in order to address them.
* To improve attendance of individuals, groups and the School.

**PROCEDURES**

Pupils are expected to attend at Bentley New Village Primary School for the full 190 days of the school academic year, unless there is a valid reason for that absence. There are two types of absence:

* 1. Authorised absence – where school has approved a pupil’s absence.
  2. Unauthorised absence – where school will not approve a pupil’s absence.

(there may also be instances where the school is closed or families are unable to attend due to national issues that limited their attendance at school. Please refer to the appendix regarding *Force Majeure*)

It is the school’s expectation that parents(s)/carer(s) will provide an explanation if a pupil is absent on the first day of absence. This can be by means of:

1. A letter / note
2. Telephone call
3. An email
4. Parent mail
5. Dojo message
6. In person

If contact explaining the pupil’s absence fails to be made on the first day of absence, the school will contact the home by telephone, email or text message on the first day of absence. The school may also choose to carry out a home visit to the family.

**Medical Appointments**

All appointments are expected to be outside of school hours. However, if an appointment does take place in school time, the school has the right to not authorise these absences. School will review each case individually and may not authorise the absence if attendance has been/is a concern.

If a medical appointment is arranged for during school hours, school expect that your child is brought to school beforehand and returned after this appointment.

**ATTENDANCE CELEBRATION**

At New Village, we like to celebrate attendance that is above normal expectations or shows a considerable improvement. We recognise that celebrating achievements and improvements is important when recognising children successes.

Bentley New Village recognises that many children in the school, particularly in Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage are reliant on an adult to bring them to school each day. Without this adult support, the child is often unable to attend. The school takes this into account when awarding rewards for good attendance so that pupils are not unduly disadvantaged.

We also recognise that attending school each day is a basic expectation and, as such, celebrations of attendance are focused on children’s attendance that is above expectation or shows considerable improvement.

**Pupils will receive awards for excellent attendance**:

* Termly Certificates: Gold 100%; Silver 99%; Bronze 98%
* A platinum certificate for 100% over two terms
* An award & certificate for 100% for the entire year
* Weekly attendance assemblies to celebrate the class with the best key stage attendance. The best class win a trophy
* A treat for any class with 100% for the week
* A treat for the class with the highest attendance during each half term
* Children with 100% attendance from their class will be drawn into a hat and the winner will win a prize.
* Every day a child is present at school they will receive an “Attendance” Dojo.

**How we celebrate attendance around school:**

* Attendance boards in each classroom that will inform children/staff/visitors of the classes current attendance and what the schools target is. The display board will also celebrate a child who has 100% attendance for the week, as well as a most improved attendance for the week.
* Display board in school entrance that will inform visitors and pupils of the school’s target, current attendance and the winners of the Phase trophies each week.
* Class daily attendance chart outside each classroom, showing the class attendance for the day and what the schools target is.

The Attendance Manager, Head teacher, Governors and class teachers will remind parents, carers and pupils of the importance of high levels of attendance through such things as:

* 1. School Council
  2. Reports in assembly
  3. Discussion during lessons
  4. Pupil attendance certificates
  5. Head teacher’s report to Governors
  6. School website
  7. Home/School agreements
  8. Newsletters
  9. School Facebook
  10. Class Dojo
  11. Rewards and Ethos boards in hall
  12. Attendance monthly workshops

**IDENTIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE ISSUES AND REFERRAL PROCEDURES**

Attendance at school is a **legal requirement and a safeguarding focus**. As a school, we are required to take action to ensure that your child is accessing their education.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA) is when your child is regularly absent from school, causing their attendance to be a cause for concern. This has a very detrimental effect on learning and can stop children meeting their potential.

Pupils presenting with issues of poor attendance/punctuality will be identified by the school who will follow the procedures outlined below. At all times, it is the duty of *all* school staff to remind parents and carers of their responsibility to ensure full school attendance.

* On the first day of any absence, and on not receiving an explanation, school will make contact with parents and carers. Any reason given should be noted on the SIMs electronic register. (**NB – we should have no ‘NO REASON KNOWN’.).** It remains the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school immediately if their child is going to be absent.
* Where appropriate, it may be that a referral is made to other agencies.
* Where appropriate, a home visit may be carried out
* Should the school continue to not make contact with, or hear from the parents, this will then be escalated to a serious safeguarding concern and may result in the involvement of other agencies including Social Care and/or the police

**HOME VISITS**

School may carry out a home visit if your child is absent and we are concerned about their attendance and/or welfare. We will carry out as many home visits as we deem necessary until the school is satisfied that there are no safeguarding issues. A calling card will be left to alert the parent/carer that a visit has been carried out.

**SYSTEMS FOR MANAGING ATTENDANCE AT NEW VILLAGE**

**Letter 1**

If your child’s attendance falls to, or below, 97%, you will receive Attendance Letter 1 to inform you that your child’s attendance is a concern and will be monitored closely for a two-week period.

**Teacher Voice, Pupil Voice and an Informal Conversation with Parent/Career**

If after 2 weeks’ attendance doesn’t begin to improve, the Attendance Officer will speak to the child and discuss any concerns or worries the child may have regarding school and attendance. The Attendance Officer will also speak to class teacher to clarify how the child’s poor attendance is directly affecting their learning ad development. A conversation with parent will then take place with parent discussing their findings whilst also hoping to address any other barriers.

**Letter 2**

If after a further two weeks’ attendance continues to fall, you will receive a Letter 2 confirming that a meeting needs to take place to discuss support in order to increase your child’s attendance. An Attendance Support Plan (ASP) will be discussed and signed by all attending the meeting. School will closely monitor your child’s attendance following this meeting.

If the meeting is not attended, parents are welcome to rearrange a meeting with school or school will issue a Non Attendance Letter outlining an Attendance Support Plan that has been made on the parent’s behalf.

**Letter 2 review**

Attendance will continue to be monitored. Regardless of your child’s attendance you will then be asked to meet with the attendance officer again and discuss any concerns/successes from the previous Letter 2 meeting and the Attendance Support Plan that was put in place.

If you didn’t attend original ASP meeting, your child’s attendance will continued to be monitored.

**EPN Warning Letter**

Attendance will continue to be monitored and the previous 4 weeks’ attendance will be taken account. If your child’s attendance hasn’t improved during this time frame the designated EWO (Education Welfare Officer) will be contacted and a possible EPN Warning Letter may be issued.

**Prosecution**

If your child’s Attendance doesn’t improve during the two-week period in which the EPN Warning letter has been issued you will be referred to the Local Authority. The Local Authority may issue a fine called an Education Penalty Notice (EPN) or pursue a prosecution.

**Penalty Notices can be issued when:**

* The child has had 10 sessions, or more, of absence in a period not exceeding 13 weeks and meets the terms of a prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, and the school or Doncaster Council has previously issued a warning letter giving the opportunity to improve attendance over a specified period.
* The child has 10 sessions of unauthorised leave of absence in term time and the Head teacher has advised the parent in writing that the leave of absence does not constitute the Head teachers view of an exceptional circumstance.
* The child has taken leave of absence in term time of not less than 10 sessions, without parents requesting authorisation from the school.
* Exclusion has taken place and the parent has allowed the child to be present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a fixed or permanent exclusion.

**It is important to note that 2 sessions are equal to 1 day**.

*The above guidance is from “Penalty Notice Code of Conduct – September 2022*”

**CONTINUED POOR ATTENDANCE**

If attendance continues to be poor after a full cycle of attendance monitoring and control, that may have ended with a fine, the school will restart the process with Letter 2 and a meeting to create a further Attendance Support plan. The process will continue until attendance is considered satisfactory.

**COMPLETING THE REGISTER**

* Registers are completed twice daily via the SIMs online registration. The Fire Register with absences only is kept in each classroom.
* Any messages from parents with regard to an absence can be input directly onto the SIMs system.
* If a teacher received information about why a child is absent (from a reliable source) they will record this information using the SIMs system to support the Attendance officer and avoid un-necessary follow-up contact.
* If no information has been received by the teacher as to the reason for the absence, then no additional information needs adding
* Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons:
  1. They provide a daily record of the attendance of all pupils
  2. They are legal documents that may be required in a court of law
* Symbols used to mark the register MUST be those referred to in the DfE guidance.
* Head teacher/Office to inform Attendance officer when holiday forms have been handed in and the head teacher has signed them, informing the family of their decision as to whether the holiday is authorised or not.

**PUNCTUALITY**

Punctuality is vital to ensuring a child thrives in the school environment, although being late doesn’t appear to have an effect on a child’s development, it can really hinder their progress.

School doors open at various times depending on what class/phase your child is in. The opening times are as follows:

Foundation Stage – 8.45

Key Stage 1 – 8.35

Lower Key Stage 2 – 8.30

Upper Key Stage 2 - 8.40

If your child arrives at school up to 30 minutes after their opening time, they will be marked as L (late). Any time after the 30-minute period, will be marked as U (Late after register closure), this mark affects a child’s overall attendance percentage.

(there may also be instances where the school is closed or start and end times are amended. Please refer to the appendix regarding *Force Majeure*)

To challenge lateness, school will:

* Speak to parent / carer at the point of drop – off
* Send a Punctuality letter home for persistent lateness
* Hold a meeting with parents & carers to discuss support & strategies
* Make a referral to the Local Authority if no improvement occurs.

**PUPILS RETURNED TO SCHOOL BY TRUANCY PATOLS AND POLICE**

* The school will induct the pupil back into school following a discussion between the Head teacher, AM, the pupil and the parents.
* The pupil’s attendance and punctuality will then be monitored and attendance and pastoral plan put in place.

**FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

**Holidays in term time cannot *be authorised,*** unless it is considered to be an exceptional circumstance. The Attendance Manager and/or the Head teacher will discuss individual requests on their own merits and make a decision as to whether to support the application. On the whole, requests for holiday absences are not supported, therefore as a parent/carer you should expect your holiday will be classed as unauthorised, you will be informed of the head teachers decision via a letter.

The school may seek the advice and guidance of the Local Authority in exceptional circumstances.

**FINES/EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICES**

Fines/Education Penalty Notices may be sought when:

* A holiday is taken in school time without direct authorisation
* A child’s attendance is under 97%, then all the absence will be unauthorised and an educational penalty notice may be issued
* There has been a claim that a child is ill but there is reason to believe a leave of absence has been taken, then the onus is upon the parent to present evidence to prove otherwise. If not, the absence will be unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice may be issued.
* The absence is deemed to have considerable impact upon the learning, progress and well-being of the child.

The Penalty is £60 per parent per pupil and, if not paid within 21 days, this will increase to £120. Failure to pay the full amount within 28 days will result in a summons to appear in the Magistrates Court on the grounds that you have failed to ensure your child’s regular attendance at school

* Please remember that, in total, there are 175 non-school days a year.
* Please remember that it is NOT the fault of the school that Travel Agencies increase their prices on holidays out of term time.

**HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?**

* Inform school about why your children are absent from school and for how long they are likely to be absent.
* Make medical appointments out of school hours.
* Only allow your children to take time off when absolutely necessary.
* Keep school informed of any changes to contact numbers or personal information so we can check immediately if your child is absent and we have not heard from you.
* If you have any concerns about punctuality, absence, or long term medical issues please inform the class teacher, Attendance Manager or Head teacher so we can offer the appropriate advice and support as soon as possible.
* Ensure a positive morning/night time routine to ensure children are able to access school consistently and on time
* If parents have any questions/concerns/queries, contact Mr Peterson (Attendance Officer) on the office number 01302 874385

**ROLE OF THE GOVERNORS**

Each term, through the Head Teacher’s Report, the Governing Body (or its representative sub-committee) will receive information regarding the level in attendance in school, for groups and as a whole school.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to challenge the Head teacher and the school’s senior leaders in relation to raising attendance, dealing with punctuality and how good attendance is promoted and rewarded.