

Whole School Attendance Policy

“Ensuring Children's Right to Education” – the guidance issued by the DfES in 2007 in point 22 mentions the responsibility of the school to have systems in place for ensuring regular school attendance.

Bleasdale School

School Motto:

‘Learning Together
Achieving Together’

Aims

We will

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Set targets to improve individual pupil and whole school attendance levels, including statutory targets (Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007).

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

We will develop a procedural framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for

- Parents and carers
- Pupils
- School staff
- Governors

to complement this policy, and identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance.

This procedural framework will include guidance on

- Registration
- What constitutes unauthorised absence
- Consistent use of symbols for authorised absence
- Holidays in term time/Extended leave
- Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for individual pupils and to identify persistent absent pupils.
- Systems for dealing with absence

- Criteria and systems for referral to and working with the Children's Integrated Services
- Systems for reintegrating pupils who have been absent
- Systems for monitoring whole school attendance and Action Planning
- Appropriate alternative curricular arrangements

Holidays in Term Time/Extended Leave

From September 2013, Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Use of Penalty Notices

School may request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence, in accordance with the local Code of Conduct. The circumstances under which such requests will be considered will be set out in the procedural framework on attendance.

Partnership Working

School will work with support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school. The criteria for referral and areas of responsibility for staff will be set out in the procedural framework on attendance in accordance with the CAF process and CIS referral routes.

Monitoring, Analysis, Action Planning

School will adopt systems for monitoring attendance at both individual pupil and whole school level, and will analyse patterns and trends of non-attendance to inform future Action Planning and target setting in respect of whole school attendance matters.

Review of Whole School Attendance Policy

School will review this policy and the associated procedural framework at least annually.

*Reviewed:
April 2021*

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

Rationale:

This document forms part of Bleasdale School's Whole School Attendance Policy. It sets out the rights, roles and responsibilities for parents/carers, pupils, school staff and governors; and the systems and procedures in place to identify how the school will deliver its aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance. It will be reviewed annually.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

Bleasdale School believes that it is important that Parents and Carers, Pupils, School Staff and Governors all work in partnership to encourage good attendance for all pupils. The following is a summary of the rights, roles and responsibilities for individual groups of stakeholders.

Parents and Carers

- Ensure the child(ren) in their care attend school regularly and punctually.
- Ensure the child(ren) in their care are ready on time for the transport.
- If the child(ren) is/are absent to inform the school office or designated member of staff on the first day of absence and provide a reason for the absence.
- If the child(ren) is/are absent for more than 1 day, to inform the school office or designated member of staff of the continued absence and update as to the reason for the absence regularly.
- On the day the child(ren) return/s to school to provide a written note, which may be via the home school book, to the class teacher or school office confirming the reason and length of absence.
- Parents must contact school before a child returns to school following a hospital admission. It is necessary for there to be a multidisciplinary meeting to ensure that all parties concerned agree that the child is ready to return to school, and that school is able to meet their needs. The meeting does not always need to take place in person, this will be decided by the Head Teacher.
- No holidays will be granted in term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- To advise the school, by contacting the school office or designated member of staff, immediately if they become aware of problems with attendance.
- *To co-operate with the school in implementing any care plans including those involving attendance.*

Pupils

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Adhere to systems for late registration.

School Staff

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate and efficient systems in place to promote and support the school attendance policy, that these are adhered to and training is given where appropriate. The Headteacher is also

responsible for liaison with individual families and external agencies to ensure appropriate support is given where attendance concerns are identified and for liaison with the Local Authority and DfE to ensure that the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.

However, Bleasdale School believes that each member of staff has responsibilities and a role to play in promoting good attendance by:

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for children.
- Providing a safe learning environment.
- Ensuring an appropriate and responsive curriculum.
- Providing a sympathetic response to any concern's regarding pupil's.
- Being aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance.
- Being aware of the role all staff can play in ensuring attendance is seen as important for all pupils.
- Adherence to the systems and procedures in place within school to promote good attendance and highlighting any concerns to the Headteacher.
- Participation in training regarding school systems and procedures.
- Willingness to communicate with children and parents about attendance.

Some staff will have specific individual responsibilities to support the attendance policy and these are outlined in the Procedures section of this framework.

Governors

- Adopt an Attendance Policy and review it annually.
- Agree statutory targets for attendance at Bleasdale School.
- Ensure that they receive reports from the Headteacher regarding school attendance as part of the school monitoring or school profiling exercise.
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance target, or when the Governors believe there is cause for concern, to require a review of the systems and procedures in place to promote good attendance.
- To promote the strong link between attendance and educational attainment to parents and pupils where appropriate and ensure that the school attendance policy and procedures are communicated effectively.

Procedures

Registration

Morning Registration is between 09:00am and 9:15am

Afternoon Registration is between 1:00pm and 1:10pm

Each class teacher or their nominated representative is responsible for marking children present in the register at morning and afternoon registration. The registers must be completed by 9.15am and 1.15pm to avoid discrepancies between classes. The class

teacher must ensure that the marked register, plus any notes received regarding absence, is available to the school office by 9:15am/1:15pm.

The school office is responsible for entering attendance on the electronic register and for inputting absence codes on a weekly basis.

Late Registration

Pupils requiring admittance to the school after registration times must be marked as late.

In accordance with current guidance, the attendance registers are closed at 9.15am. This means that any pupil who arrives after the registers are closed (9.15am) will be given a late mark (U) in the register. In addition please note the arrival time and reason for lateness. This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session. In addition to using the U code in this instance, office staff will also use the facility within the SIMS attendance module to record the number of minutes late for each pupil, on each occasion. This facility will allow school staff to monitor and manage developing patterns of lateness more effectively. The fact that the U code is classed as an unauthorised absence means that when it is used pupils are likely to be missing significant amounts of schooling; putting their educational progress at risk.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

In every instance it is the Headteacher who determines whether an absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. This decision is made based on information provided by parents/carers. However, because the register is a legal document, the Headteacher has responsibility to ensure that it is completed accurately and in accordance with current guidance. For this reason it is not sufficient for an absence to be recorded as authorised based entirely on information provided by parents/carers.

The school office is responsible for maintaining records of reason and length of absence.

- Parents/Carers are requested to contact the school office or designated member of staff on the **first day** of absence advising of the reason for the absence and expected return date; if known.
- Where information is provided to the class teacher they are responsible for passing this information to the school office.
- Where a verbal message is taken this should be recorded on the school pro-forma, which must be completed in class and forwarded to the school office.
- Where a written note is received this should also be forwarded to the school office.
- Where the absence is for several days, the Parent/Carer is responsible for informing the school office of the continued absence and updating them as to the reason for the absence on a regular basis.

If a child is absent and no contact has been made by the family, the **class teacher** will contact the family on the first day of absence. If contact cannot be made the Headteacher should be informed and, in the case of prolonged or repeated absence without justification being given, the Headteacher will determine whether the Pupil Attendance Support Team should be advised.

The Headteacher is responsible for determining what is classed as authorised and what is classed as unauthorised absence. Examples of authorised absence:

- Medical or Dental appointments
- Illness
- Religious Festival
- Wedding of close family member

Examples of unauthorised absence:

- Hair appointment
- Shopping
- Birthdays

The school office is responsible for inputting the appropriate absence code on the electronic register. Where they are not certain whether an absence is authorised or not they should seek advice from the Headteacher.

Signing Out

The school office is responsible for overseeing the procedure for releasing children where parents/carers have requested and been granted authorised absence for an appointment in school time.

If a child is leaving early, for an appointment, going home ill, or for any other reason, this needs to be written in the register noting the reason.

The child(ren) can only be released to a parent or authorised carer/family member, or to their usual home school transport, (normally to be authorised in writing by the legal guardian of the child). The school office is responsible for inputting the appropriate absence code on the electronic register.

Holidays/Extended Leave in Term Time

From September 2013, Headteachers may not grant any leave or absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents/Carers who wish to request holidays during term time should complete an application form, available from the school office, as soon as possible prior to the first proposed date of absence. The Headteacher will consider the request and advise in writing within 5 days whether the absence will be authorised or not. Where concerns exist the Headteacher will request a meeting with parents before any period of leave for a holiday is authorised.

The school office is responsible for recording holidays/extended leave in the electronic register and will retain copies of correspondence regarding requested leave of absence for three years. They will also be responsible for highlighting to the Headteacher if absence continues after the notified period. In this instance the Headteacher will undertake further liaison with the family, pupil and Early Intervention Team as appropriate and a fixed penalty notice may be considered.

Monitoring, Analysis and Action Planning

The Governors have determined that the Headteacher has overall responsibility for the monitoring, analysis and action planning of school attendance. The Headteacher is also responsible for ensuring that data is returned promptly to the Local Authority and DfE within deadlines. However, it is expected that the day to day implementation of this will largely rest with the class teachers who take the register and highlight causes for concern and the school office who are responsible for maintaining the school records on attendance and for highlighting causes for concern.

The School Attendance Co-ordinator will review the attendance records with the School Business Administrator at least half termly to check that there are no outstanding causes for concern and that codes are being applied consistently. In addition the Headteacher will also raise specific concerns with parents/carers as they arise.

The Headteacher is required to review this Whole School Attendance Policy and Procedure Framework annually and to report on attendance matters to the Governors termly. The Governors will also review the Attendance Policy at least annually to ensure that it continues to meet the school circumstances.

If there is a trend of worsening attendance, discussions should be held with the School Attendance Co-ordinator to identify Action Plans to reverse the trend. It should also be reported to the Governors at the next full Governor's meeting.

Criteria and Systems for referral to and working with the School Attendance Consultant and the Early Intervention Team

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring consistent referral of regular or unjustified absence. The criteria for referral are outlined in the systems below.

In addition to the above, the Headteacher is required to discuss general attendance matters with the School Attendance Consultant at least once a year. The purpose of these discussions is to:

- Monitor progress towards targets, highlighting any concerns and identifying any action required.
- To receive guidance on latest best practice.
- To receive information about local and national trends and benchmarking.
- To discuss whether current attendance policy and procedures are effective.

School System for dealing with concerns about Lateness and Absence

The school office or designated member of staff is responsible for advising the Headteacher of pupils who are persistently late or absent as issues arise.

The class teacher is also responsible for raising concerns about lateness or absence of class members to the Headteacher as issues arise.

In addition to this the Headteacher will use electronic systems to monitor the attendance of individual pupils at least once every half term.

Once concerns have been raised:

- A multidisciplinary team will meet in school to discuss the issues around the attendance problems of the child, giving particular note to any medical problems and or care issues.
- The Headteacher will discuss the matter informally with the family.
- Parents will be asked to agree to a parenting contract which will include the setting of targets and will be reviewed regularly.
- If lateness/absence persists, and school procedures fail to provoke the required level of improvement, the Headteacher will contact the Early Intervention Team who will arrange meetings with the family and Headteacher as appropriate and determine whether any interventions are required. These interventions will include consideration of the use of legal sanctions.

School System for reintegrating pupils who have had long term absence

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, the Headteacher, class teacher and other support services will liaise with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

Alternative curricular arrangements

If school is notified that a pupil will be off school for an extended period the Headteacher will liaise with the family and other support services to determine whether it is appropriate to provide work to be completed at home.

Communication of Attendance Policy and Procedure

It is important that the School's Policy on Attendance is communicated to all the stakeholders and that parents, pupils and staff know the procedures and systems that are in place to implement it.

The Governors have determined that:

- The Attendance Policy will be placed on the School Website together with a summary of the procedure for requesting absence, holidays in term time, and signing in and out of school.
- Details of the Policy and the procedure for requesting absence, holidays in term time, and signing in and out of school will be disseminated as part of the new parent induction process e.g. induction package, talks to new parents.
- Reference to the School Attendance Policy re Holidays during term time and absence is to be made clear when the school calendar of dates is sent out each year.
- Summary of Responsibilities under the Attendance Policy will be contained in the Home/School Agreement.
- Staff responsibilities will be contained in the Staff Handbook
- The Headteacher will ensure that staff receive training regarding their responsibilities re: the Attendance Policy and Procedures.
- The Headteacher will provide a summary of attendance and causes for concern at least annually to the Governors.

Reviewed April 2021

Appendix 1

Exceptional Circumstances

- Pupil living across the County border with different holiday pattern to siblings/family
- Pupil with extreme complex medical needs requiring holidays to be taken in quieter times of year
- Parent requiring a carer to attend the family holiday and carer only being available on set dates.
- Wedding/Funeral of a close family member
- Organised Charity holiday