Bevendean Primary School

Attendance Policy

This policy was adopted in **October 2015**

This Policy is due for review in **October 2019**

Rationale

➢ At Bevendean Primary School we strive for excellence and enjoyment by providing a safe, secure, caring and nurturing family environment where all are valued and respected as individuals. Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Bevendean Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Purpose

Through this Policy we aim to:

➢ develop high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children.

➢ Ensure every pupil has the right to have access to the full time education to which they are entitled and as a result 'succeed and thrive' during their time at Bevendean Primary School.

➢ Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.

➢ Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.

➢ Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.

➢ Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.

➢ Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.

➢ Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and external agencies and the Local Authority so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.

➢ Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

➢ Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.

➢ Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Guidelines

- **Promoting Good Attendance at Bevendean Primary School**

The school acknowledges that good attendance should be recognised and rewarded.

- Weekly Class Attendance – each week classes with 95% attendance and higher are presented with either a bronze, silver or gold certificate. In addition, the class with the highest attendance is presented with a star class certificate. This encourages the children to work as a team towards good attendance.
- Weekly Individual Attendance – each week every child who has 100% attendance (half term to date) will be entered into a small prize draw for their year group.
- Termly Class Attendance – at the end of each school term classes with 95% attendance and higher are presented with either a bronze, silver or gold certificate. The class with the highest attendance will be presented with a star class certificate and rewarded with an in-house reward.

  Yearly Individual Attendance – at the end of the school year children with 100% attendance will be presented with a certificate and receive a prize in recognition of their achievement.

- **Legal Requirements**

The law requires all schools to record the attendance of each pupil at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Schools should follow up on absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is authorized or unauthorized.

The Government expects:

- Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive to school on time.
- Schools and local authorities to:
  - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
  - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
  - Act early to address patterns of absence
  - Recognise the possible links between low levels of attendance and child protection concerns

➢ Notifying Absences

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Parents/carers should notify the school before 9.am on the first school day of his / her child's absence from school. If the reason for absence is sickness and it continues - or is likely to continue - for more than 3 days, the school reserves the right to request medical evidence in order to authorise the absence.

If any child is absent and the school has not been notified, the school will endeavour to make contact with the parent on the first day of absence... In the event that contact could not be made the school will record this on the register. If there are any child welfare / safety concerns then the matter may be referred to the local authority Access to Education service, Children Missing Education Officer, and/or Social Services. In the case of children in care or children in need, the school will contact the family's social worker. We will follow the local authority procedures for children missing from education if a child is absent from school for 20 consecutive school days and no reasonable explanation has been provided.

Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his / her child attends that school then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

➢ Authorised Absences

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, serious medical appointments;
- Religious observance by the religious body to which the child's family belongs;
- Exclusion
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment
- Family bereavement
- Exceptional occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by the school on an individual basis)
- Extreme family emergencies(full disclosure would be required in the strictest of confidence)

➢ Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable. Absence should not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- No explanation is offered by the parent / carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory e.g. shopping, minding the house, baby-sitting, hair-cut, birthday etc.
- Truancy
- Unexplained absences
- Children who arrive at school after registers have closed.
- Day trips or holidays in term time not authorised by the school

➢ Holidays During Term Time

In April 2013 the government issued amendments to 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.The amendments make it clear that 'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.' Therefore, our school will only authorise holidays in line with these regulations. Exceptional circumstance will only be agreed **very rarely**.

Parents should apply by letter if they are considering a holiday in term time at least 2 weeks before the holiday is planned. The school will consider the request and let parents know in writing whether it has been authorised.

➢ Persistent Absenteeism

The school will continuously monitor each child's attendance record. The school follows a three step process for any children who are persistently absent for any reason:

1) The Attendance Officer will review at least once, all absences and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 95% in any half-term. In most cases, the school will send a letter to the parents/carers informing them of their child's attendance and the school's concerns. In the case of children in care or children in need, the school will also contact the family's social worker.
2) If a child's attendance level has not improved within 2 weeks, or has fallen further, , the attendance officer will write to the parent/carer again, expressing concern. If after a further 2 week review there has not been significant improvement, the parent/carer will be invited into school for an Attendance Support Meeting where a parent contract will be put in place. The attendance officer will liaise with the school learning mentor, class teacher and when necessary other professionals if the need for support is identified.
3) In the event that the child's attendance levels still do not improve then the school will refer the matter to the local authority access to education team. Action which may then be taken can include, issue of a Fixed penalty Notice, court proceedings to prosecute parents/carers or to seek an education supervision order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

➢ Access to Education

The local authority access to education team provides support to parents, carers and schools to ensure that all children of statutory school age in Brighton & Hove receive full time education and that legal requirements around school attendance are adhered to.

➢ Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; this can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect all children to be **in class** at this time. Registers are marked by **9.00am**. Any children arriving after this time **must report to the school office** to be marked in.

At 9.15am the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after this time – for reasons not considered acceptable by the school – they will be recorded as 'Late after registers closed'. They

are marked as being on site but this does not count as a present mark and will show as an **unauthorised absence** and affect their attendance record.

➢ Persistent Lateness

The school follows Local Authority guidelines for children who are persistently late:

1) When a child is persistently late (6 sessions within a period of 6 school weeks) the school will send a letter to the parents / carers informing them of their child's persistent lateness and the school's concerns. They will be offered a meeting with the Attendance Officer to discuss the matter and see if there are any ways in which the school can help.
2) In the event that the child's punctuality does not improve then the school will refer the matter to the Local Authority for consideration of issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

➢ Monitoring

The school curriculum, standards and welfare sub-committee is responsible for monitoring the impact of this policy.