



## **BREDON HILL ACADEMY**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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# Bredon Hill Academy

*“Not only do schools equip children with the knowledge and qualifications they need for later life, but they are also places where children make friends, learn new hobbies, and build on their ambitions for the future. If we want to offer every child the best chance in life, it must start with ensuring that they can regularly attend school.”*

*Rachel de Souza, Children’s Commissioner 2023*

## **Attendance Policy - Introduction**

Bredon Hill Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority (LA). Details of such a penalty notice are outlined in a letter in response to a leave of absence request.

## **Reasons for absence**

Every half-day absence from school legally has to be recorded by staff at the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (in line with DfE guidelines and at the discretion of the headteacher). Please see below.

**Unauthorised absences** are those that the school do not consider reasonable and for which no ‘leave’ has been given.

There are only a small number of circumstances where missing a school day is permitted. Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on a specific day due to exceptional circumstances. This will have been discussed with the headteacher prior to the day of absence.
- Your child cannot go to school on a specific day because they are observing a religious event.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available or has not been provided yet.
- Your child does not have a permanent address and you are required to travel for work. This exception only applies if your child attends their usual school or another school where you are staying as often as possible. This must be 200 sessions (am/pm) or more a year if they are aged 6 or older.

## **School Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

## **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school (8.20am). The registers will remain open for until 9am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless an acceptable reason is provided.

The afternoon registration will be taken during lesson 4.

## **First Day Absence**

Parents are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence. If your child is off for more than one day, it is important that the office is kept informed on a daily basis. The attendance officer/school office staff will contact parents/carers if the school has not been notified of the absence.

## **Continuing Absence**

If there is continuing absence the school will liaise with their Education Welfare Officer.

At BHA we follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries into absence e.g. discussions with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), relatives, neighbours landlords etc to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm. There may be occasion where we have been unable to contact parents/carers and we have no information as to the whereabouts of the child. In that case, the school, Education Welfare Officer or police will do a home visit. We inform the local authority of any pupil who has missed ten school days or more without permission. When appropriate, the school's DSL will make a referral to social services and/or police.

## **Absence Notes**

Notes and evidence of phone calls and e-mails received from parents/carers explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. In addition, written medical evidence may sometimes be requested for extended/frequent periods of absence due to illness.

## **Leave of absence in term time**

Absence during term-time for holidays or other events interrupts teaching and learning for the pupil, and disrupts the routine for others in school. It can have a serious impact on progress and attainment.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term-time for holidays and other special occasions unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Parents should note that there is no right to such leave; if granted, it is at the sole discretion of the headteacher. The school's term dates are published a year in advance and are made available on the school's website in the expectation that parents/carers will ensure that holidays are taken during school holiday times

Any request for leave must be made in advance; schools cannot grant such leave retrospectively. Any leave taken without prior agreement will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may lead to parents being issued with a penalty notice.

The school will consider any request for leave on its individual merits, but leave will be granted only in truly exceptional circumstances.

## Requests for Leave of Absence

If a parent/carer wishes to request leave of absence, they should complete the relevant form available on the school website ([BHA website-leave of absence request](#)) and either email it to [absence@bredon.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:absence@bredon.worcs.sch.uk) or return it to the school office at least 6 weeks in advance of the proposed date. Parents/carers will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application for leave of absence.

## Children Missing Education

In line with Children Missing Education: Statutory guidance for local authorities (2016), the school has a duty to notify the local authority when concerns surrounding the following are raised:

- Irregular attendance or regular absence where attendance is not improving despite ongoing school intervention.
- 10 days continuous absence (including if the child is likely to be absent for more than 15 days due to illness/injury).

Unexplained or extended absences will trigger safeguarding procedures, which will include home visits and communication with relevant agencies. If our school has any safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary to ensure child's safety and well-being. If our school is unable to work in partnership with you as parents/carers, we may refer to the Local Authority. We will only ever do this if everything else has failed. We hope as parents/carers you will work with us to best support your child, so this does not need to happen.

## Persistent Absence and Irregular Attendance

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is irregular or below 90% over the school year.

10% absence adds up to missing almost half a term out of the whole school year. Pupils who miss this much school are called 'persistent absentees' by the government, whatever the reason for their absence.

Number of days missed	Category
5 days missed	Acceptable
6-9	Early intervention
10 -18	Risk of Persistent Absence (PA)
19 days or more	Persistent Absence (PA) At risk of Severe Absence

Procedures are in place for children who are regularly absent and/or risk becoming persistent absentees including:

- Monitoring individual pupils, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- Working in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality is an issue.
- Writing to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- Face-to-face meetings in school with parents/carers.
- To offer support to parents/carers experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Celebrating good/improved attendance.
- Support from EWO.
- Access wider support services.

The school promotes good attendance and recognises improved attendance e.g. weekly award for the tutor group with the highest attendance shared with the whole school.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parent/carers may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Further information can be found on the [Worcestershire Children's First website: Education Law](#). We are obliged to refer any issues to the Local Authority who will decide whether to issue a Penalty Notice. BHA may refer a child to the Local Authority if:

- A child's attendance drops below 90% and appropriate medical evidence has not been provided.
- A child's attendance declines rapidly and there is little evidence of parental/carer engagement.
- A child's attendance declines rapidly and parents/carers refuse to accept their responsibility for ensuring that their child attends the school every day and on time.
- Parents/carers condone their child's absence or truancy.
- Parents/carers remove their child from school for unauthorised absence including family holidays.

After consultation with the school, the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice to a parent/carer. From August 2024, the Penalty Notice is **£80** per parent/carer, per child, if paid within 21 days and increases to **£160** if paid within 28 days. The local authority's code of conduct states that 'the issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in cases of:'

- An excluded child is found in a public place during the school hours of the first five days of exclusion
- Overt truancy is detected (including being caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally condoned absence is evidenced
- Unauthorised leave of absence has been taken (unauthorised family holidays)
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

## School Support

Our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) ensures comprehensive attendance intervention for all our children and young people. The system incorporates staff, children/young people, parent/carers, and external agencies and is completely aligned with Department for Education (DFE) guidelines.

Our school systems of support to remove barriers to attendance consist of three tiers:

- **Tier 1 Universal school wide strategies:** provides a universal offering to all our children and young people, including whole class rewards for good attendance.
- **Tier 2 Individualised strategies:** involves early internal support and intervention.
- **Tier 3 Higher needs strategies:** is higher levels of support for children, young people, and families who require access to external agency support.

Number of days missed	Tier Support Level	Category
5 days missed	1	Acceptable
6-9	2	Early intervention
10 -18	2	Risk of Persistent Absence (PA)
19 days or more	3	Persistent Absence (PA) At risk of Severe Absence

## **Elective Home Education and removal from school roll**

The 1996 Education Act states that, '*it is the duty of parents to secure an appropriate full-time education for their children of compulsory school age*'. Parents/carers can carry out this duty by ensuring their child attends school or parents/carers may decide to take on the duty to educate their child/children themselves and educate them at home – this is called Elective Home Education.

We respect the right of parents/carers to educate their child at home, however, are aware that sometimes this is a response to dissatisfaction with school or other difficulties. We encourage parents/carers to discuss their concerns with the appropriate school staff in order to allow the opportunity to find solutions and provide support.

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll only under certain circumstances defined in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm.

Where children have moved out of area, they are only deleted from the school register when the school is satisfied that the child has been added to the register of a new provider. In cases where this cannot be established, our schools will follow the 'de-rolling checklist' provided by the Local Authority. If, having completed the checks, the child's whereabouts have not been determined, our school may remove the child from roll after 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence and notify relevant agencies.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **Governors**

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

### **School**

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil, group and whole school attendance patterns.

### ***Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)***

- To conduct home visits to ensure the welfare and safety of a pupil in the event of unauthorised, unexplained absence.
- To liaise with individual families and refer to agencies for external support.

### ***Education Welfare Officer (EWO)***

- To support the whole school through regular monitoring of individual children's attendance.
- To liaise with the Headteacher/Office staff.
- To support parents/carers to resolve attendance issues.
- To liaise with the LAs prosecutions officer, when legal intervention needs to be considered.

## **Monitoring & Evaluation**

Attendance data will be collected weekly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include

- Persistent Absence Status (less than 90%).
- Incomplete weeks.
- Regular pattern of absence on certain days.
- Lateness.
- Periods of extended absence.
- Periods of "unauthorised" absence.

This data will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer as part of the regular weekly meetings and referrals made as necessary.

The Headteacher or the Attendance Officer, the DSL and the Education Welfare Officer will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend an attendance target to the Governors.

The Governors will set an annual target of attendance and absence and review this annually at its first meeting.

## **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All of the staff at Bredon Hill Academy are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance.

## **Appendices**

### **1. The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall enable them to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to their age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special needs they may have

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term 'parent' is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

### **Register and Admission Roll keeping.**

The legal requirements are found in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006