



ATTENDANCE and SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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ATTENDANCE AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

Excellent attendance and punctuality are key to ensuring that children and young people have the best life chances and opportunities. All staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure that all our pupils receive an appropriate education suitable to their needs. We work with families to identify reasons for poor attendance and support them to resolve any difficulties. Our trust Attendance and Safeguarding Policy is based upon a number of principles:

- Good attendance is intrinsic to pupil achievement and welfare
- We believe that pupils will fulfil their potential if they attend school regularly and punctually
- Good attendance contributes to pupils feeling included in their school community
- Acting early to address patterns of absence improves children's outcomes
- Pupils with good attendance make better progress, both socially and academically and find learning more satisfying

This policy contributes to towards the aim to meet the outcomes of the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan, where children and young people:

- Are safe from harm
- Do well at all levels of learning and have skills for life
- Enjoy healthy lifestyles
- Have fun growing up
- Are active citizens who feel they have a voice and influence

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Statutory guidance on children missing in education](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Expectations

In order for the Brigshaw Learning Partnership Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times.

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or another adult in school, any problems that deter them from attending school eg bullying

We expect that all parents/carers/persons with day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the child or young person in their care arrive at school punctually, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn
- contact the school on the first day of the child or young person's absence prior to registration or as soon as practically possible
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child or young person away from school
- ensure holidays are not booked in term time. Permission for holidays in term time will not be granted.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Please see appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance at school is concerned.

If no contact can be made by 11:30am this will be escalated to a member of the senior leadership team and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed.

We expect our schools will:

- ensure that attendance is a high priority within the school community;
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out accurately
- ensure attendance and absences (authorised and unauthorised) are monitored and evaluated
- Follow up on absence to ascertain the reason,
- Investigate unauthorised absence and ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- use a range of effective intervention strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism
- investigate any problems that may lead to non-attendance
- keep parents informed of attendance issues

- monitor attendance data, compared to national data and report it to governors
- Follow school procedures and DfE guidance for Children Missing in Education (see Appendix B)

The Brigshaw Learning Partnership will:

- provide an Attendance Improvement Officer(AIO) for support and advice
- provide a school attendance panel
- provide training for staff with responsibility for attendance

We expect the Local Authority will:

- support the BLP with legal advice and guidance
- Leeds City Council is responsible for issuing penalty notices on behalf of schools in the city

Attendance is defined as:

Participation in the programme of educational activities arranged by the school. In addition to actual attendance within the school premises it covers:

- Work experience
- Educational visits
- Sports, musical or theatrical productions
- Hospital tuition
- Alternative curriculum programmes
- Psychological services activities

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised

Authorised absence is defined as:

- Sickness, unless there is a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness
- Medical and dental treatment. These are to be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Proof of appointment will be needed.
- Bereavement
- Domestic circumstances relating to exceptional hardship at home
- Religious observance, where the day is exclusively set apart by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- Meetings prior to and in court
- Attendance at or in connection with meetings by Children's Social Work Service
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school
- Approved school study leave

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription,

appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Promoting Good Attendance

The Brigshaw Learning Partnership encourages regular attendance in the following ways;

- by providing inclusive and welcoming learning environments
- by responding promptly to a child/ young person's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- by celebrating good and improved attendance.

Unauthorised absences in term time

Unauthorised absence is defined as:

- Family holidays taken in term time
- Leave for sickness which cannot be evidenced
- Truancy defined as unauthorised absence from school for any period as a result of premeditated or spontaneous action on the part of the pupil parent or both
- Unexplained absence
- A pupil who arrives late after the register has closed will be marked as absent

The Brigshaw learning partnership has adopted the Fast Track Process for fining non-attendance as set out by the Local Authority.

- Schools will identify pupils who have 10 absences [5 days] within a 12 week period
- Schools will send a letter to parents
- Schools will monitor for 20 days
- If no improvement schools will invite parents to a meeting
- At the meeting schools will issue a penalty notice warning letter
- After the meeting schools will monitor for a further 20 days
- If no improvement shown schools can refer to the authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Holidays in school term time

The government made a change in legislation from 1 September 2013, which affects all schools in the country not just in Leeds. The changes mean that schools are no longer allowed to authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. Nationally, five million school days were missed in the academic year 2011/ 2012 because of family holidays in term time, which is 10 per cent of overall absence in schools. This high level of absence led the government to make this important change to legislation.

- **no requests for holidays can be authorised during term time** unless there are exceptional circumstances

The 'exceptional circumstances' mentioned by the Department for Education are very limited. It is therefore anticipated that there will be very few requests for leave of

absence in term time that will be exceptional and so most requests will have to be declined and marked as unauthorised. The new legislation is designed to support increased attendance and to improve standards in our schools.

The law does not now give any automatic parental right to take a child on holiday during term-time. Parents/carers can be fined for taking a child on holiday during term-time without consent from the school and as already mentioned consent will probably be declined. If parents/carers take their child on holiday during term time for 5 or more days they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice ~~and the timescale for paying a penalty notice has been reduced.~~ A fixed penalty notice can require a parent/carer to pay a sum of either £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Each parent/carer can be issued with a notice for each child so two parents/carers with two children can potentially be issued with four notices.

If you are issued with a fine, details of how to pay will be included on the letter that you will receive with it. It is important to note that the fine has to be paid in full – instalments cannot be accepted. Remember that if a fine is not paid, then you could be summoned to the magistrate's court, which has more serious consequences. If a parent is found guilty in court they can be fined up to £1000 and will have a criminal record, which can affect employment. If a person strongly disagrees with receiving a fine, they can contact the council directly with any information that they feel should be taken into consideration about whether the fine is valid or not. Council services will take reasonable steps to ensure that a fine is only issued in the right circumstances and will only withdraw the fine if there is sound evidence that it should not have been issued in the first place.

Exceptional Circumstances

The Head Teacher will hear applications for leave during term time to decide whether they meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances' to be authorised. They may be supported by the Attendance Improvement Officer, the Cluster and Targeted Services Leader and other members of staff.

Responding to Non-Attendance

The Brigshaw Learning Partnership (BLP) takes safeguarding seriously. When a pupil does not attend school we will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason for absence and ensure proper safeguarding action is taken.

When a child is absent for an un-known reason, we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9 a.m. the school will endeavour to contact carers that day including calling all contact numbers and next of kin if appropriate.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try and contact the parent/carer. The school named staff for attendance may also perform a home visit.
- If it is difficult to make contact with families or attendance becomes an issue, the AIO will become involved and work with families to improve attendance and set future expectations.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set out, may result in: further action; a fixed penalty notice; an application for an Education Supervision Order; a court prosecution or a Parenting Order.

Management of attendance

Attendance at all schools in the trust will be constantly monitored by each school in conjunction with the AIO who will also liaise with Leeds City Council as necessary.

Persistent Absentees:

A child / young person with attendance of less than 90% is deemed to be persistently absent. Absence of this level is doing considerable damage to any child/ young person's education. Parents/carers are liable to a fine of up to £2500 or imprisonment for failing to ensure regular attendance without good reason.

Persistent Absentees are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral team.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to:

our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and
Behaviour Policy

Complaints

An individual wishing to make a complaint about anything relating to this policy should refer to the BLP Complaint Policy published on the BLP Website.

Equality Impact Statement

We will do all we can to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. We shall do this through regular monitoring and evaluation of our policies. On review we shall assess and consult relevant stakeholders on the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of all aspects of equality, as laid down in the Equality Act (2010). This will include, but not necessarily be limited to: race; gender; sexual orientation; disability; ethnicity; religion; cultural beliefs and pregnancy/maternity.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. See also the addendum; recording attendance in relation to coronavirus

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix B

Guidance for staff on procedures for Children Missing in Education

These procedures should be read in conjunction with BLP Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies.

The types of pupils who are most at risk of going missing from education are children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Come from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

The school must make 'reasonable enquiries' for pupils who aren't attending.

This applies to pupils who:

- Haven't returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, **or**
- Have been absent without authorisation for 20 consecutive days

Making 'reasonable enquiries' includes **1 or more** of the following:

- Contacting parents, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Checking local databases within the LA, or the DfE's Key to Success or school2school systems
- Following local information sharing arrangements, making enquiries to:
 - other local databases and agencies
 - agencies known to be involved with the family
- Checking with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Checking with the LA and school from which your pupil moved from originally, or any past LAs or schools that have educated your pupil
- Checking with the LA where your pupil lives, if its different from the one where your school is
- In the case of children of service personnel, checking with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service
- Conducting a home visit, following BLP policies and risk assessment procedures. If appropriate, making enquiries with neighbours and relatives

If the school still isn't able to locate the pupil (and neither can the LA), the school can remove them from your register.