



# Brabourne CE Primary School

## Attendance Policy – October 2023

This policy has been prepared with the Christian Values of responsibility foremost – this is a core value of the school and all members of the school community aspire to live by it daily. Parents have a responsibility to ensure their children attend school. Staff and governors have a responsibility to ensure pupils are keen to attend and they address attendance issues appropriately. Brabourne CEP School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Our expectation is that no pupil has unauthorised absence.

### Statement of Intent

Brabourne CEP School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance and punctuality for all our pupils. Attendance is celebrated and valued through Celebration Worship and school communications.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Brabourne CEP School. The person with overall responsibility for attendance and with whom to discuss attendance support and issues, is Mr Andrew Stapley, Headteacher, contactable through the school office.

### 1. Introduction

Your child should always attend school regularly during **term times**. There are only two real exceptions to this:

- When your child is too ill to go to school
- When the school has authorised your child to be absent

The school's opening hours are:

Early morning club 8.15-8.40am

8.40 school gates open  
8.40-8.50am drop off  
8.50am school day starts  
8.50 register  
9.05 register closes  
1.00pm register  
1.15pm register closes  
3.20pm end of school day  
Wrap-around care until 5.15pm

## **2. Parental responsibility**

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time.

Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.50am. If pupils arrive after this time, they should report to the school office with the adult dropping them off. If a pupil is persistently late, the Headteacher will initially discuss this with the parents/carers to see if a solution can be found.

Register will close at 9.05am and 1.15 in the afternoon.

## **3. The Role of the School Staff**

At Brabourne CEP School, there is a whole-school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Head Teacher (Mr A. Stapley) has overall responsibility for attendance and is supported by the Office Manager (Mrs K. Parry).

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The Office Manager/class teacher notifies the Headteacher of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Brabourne CEP School to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven-day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents/carers are informed regularly throughout the year of children's attendance figures

## **4. Illness**

If your child is too ill to attend school, you should always call the school to let us know by 9:05am stating the reason.

The school reserves the right to seek evidence from health professional services of medical illness where the school has a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of an illness or persistent illness. Where the school has safeguarding concerns, the school will follow its Child Protection policy.

## 5. Authorised absences from school

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent/carer's explanation. These are some examples of situations the Headteacher might consider good reasons for your child to be out of school:

- Family bereavement
- Medical appointments
- Year 6 pupils visiting prospective secondary schools.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

It is always the school's decision whether or not to allow you to take your child out of school **during term time**. If you do not ask permission, or we do not give it and you take your child out of school anyway, this will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence**.

Any requests must be sought from the Headteacher, preferably in writing, and ideally at least two weeks in advance. The headteacher and Chair of Governors are not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. Decisions on whether absence will be authorised will be based on each individual case but all requests will be dealt with fairly and consistently.

## 6. Tracking

Pupil attendance is regularly monitored by the Headteacher to monitor, identify and prevent pupils who are vulnerable becoming persistent absentees. Breakdowns of pupil attendance data is monitored by the Governing body. Vulnerable pupils' attendance is tracked in detail through regular pupil progress reviews. Pupils with a social worker are tracked through personal educational plans.

## 7. Unauthorised absences

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

## Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance

The time of year may impact on % levels as an absence in the first weeks of term will show as a higher figure. As a general guide the following will apply, although individual circumstances will be considered before any action.

Persistent is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school sessions. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school sessions.

96% – 100% attendance: Office Manager/Teaching staff to investigate and notify the Head Teacher of concerns.

90% – 96% attendance – school intervention letters/meetings with parents/action plans drawn up.

Where there is no justifiable reason for absence, school action may include:

Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.

Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.

Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers.

Where necessary this includes working with partners.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.

If the school feels that your child isn't attending properly because:

- Their attendance is below 90% without justifiable reason
- They have persistent unauthorised absences
- Support offered by the school is not successful or engaged in

we will inform the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Service to investigate what is happening.

- the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Request for Support.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.

Local Authority Action may include:-

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies

- Fast Track to Prosecution

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

### **8. Being late for school**

At Brabourne CEP School pupils should arrive by 8.50am. Pupils arriving after this time must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded (L).

Frequent lateness (L) will result in the following measures:

- 10 instances (over a school year) – Warning letter from the Headteacher
- 20 instances (over a school year) – Warning letter from the Chair of Governors

The register will close at 9.05am and 1.15pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed can be marked as late (Code U Unauthorised).

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents as part of overall attendance and could provide grounds for referral to the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Service.

### **9. Children Missing In Education**

No child should be deleted from the school register without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

### **10. Reports**

A pupil's attendance will be reported to parents throughout the year, through interim reports, parent consultation evenings and the final year reports at the end of the academic year.

## **10. Equality/Inclusion**

Whilst the school's policy will be applied fairly and consistently, the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance will be considered, along with the schools' obligations under the:

- Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK

([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

## **11. Monitoring the policy**

The Headteacher and the Governors will review this policy every two years. The Headteacher will report attendance figures to the Governing Body at each meeting. The school reserves the right to introduce fixed penalty notices at any point.

## Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

