



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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## REVIEW SHEET

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
1	Original	Mar 2015
2	Updated to include new Persistent Absence threshold and changes to the school day	Dec 2015
3	Changed to reflect new procedures & addition of Governor's Attendance Panel	Jun 2016
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Good attendance is essential if students are to progress well and fulfil their educational potential at Beacon Hill Community School. We will take appropriate action to ensure that all students achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted on as quickly as possible. This support for attendance is achieved through our pastoral, academic and administration teams and systems.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming environment for all students and staff and will work with students and their families to ensure that each student attends school regularly and punctually.

School attendance is subject to various [Education laws](#)<sup>i</sup> and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

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

## **2. AIMS**

### **Beacon Hill Community School aims to:**

- Improve the overall percentage attendance of students at school.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for those associated with the school including students, parents, carers, teachers and governors.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
- Develop a systematic approach to collating and analysing attendance related data.
- Develop positive communication between school and home.
- Maintain a system of rewards and sanctions for attendance and punctuality.
- Work effectively with The Local Authority Children's services and agencies.

### **It is recognised that:**

- The majority of students want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peers, and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society.
- Many students and their parents may need to be supported at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- It is the responsibility of parents and students to ensure attendance at school as [required by law](#).

## **3. EXPECTATIONS**

### **Beacon Hill Community School expects that all our students will:**

- Attend school regularly, achieving good attendance of 95% or above.
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- Carry out any work provided by the school during an authorised leave period.

### **Beacon Hill Community School expects that parents will:**

- Ensure that their child attends school, arriving punctually for morning registration at **8.45am**.
- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school.

- Make daily contact with the school by **9:00am** on each day their child is unable to attend school.
- Endeavour to make health appointments outside the school day or within school holidays especially for routine scheduled appointments and where not possible to aim for the beginning or end of the school day thus allowing at least half a day of education .
- Provide medical evidence to cover illness absence of 5 days or more.
- Provide copies of letters or appointment cards for appointments that impact on the school day.
- Not take holidays in term time.
- Seek permission from the school for any leave of absence. Exceptional Absence Request forms (*appendix 1*) are available from the school office or website. The Headteacher has the right to refuse authorisation of absences in accordance with government guidelines. Parents/Guardians may be fined for taking their child out of school for an unauthorised leave of absence. ([see section 7: Holiday Absence](#))

Parents and students can expect the following:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact when a student fails to attend without providing good reason.
- Action on any attendance related problem notified to the school.
- Referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate

## **4. PROCEDURES**

Any student 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]. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The school responds to **non-attendance** by:

- Contacting parents on the first day of an absence by telephone or text message if no reason has been received.
- If there is no response a follow up phone call or text will be made and if no reply an unexplained absence letter will be sent home. If no reason is given, the absence will remain unauthorised.
- A letter will be sent to parents/guardians of students whose attendance falls below 90% and where there are no extenuating circumstances.
- Contacting external supporting agencies where appropriate e.g. Early Help Assessment, Safeguarding Hub, CAMHS or Hospital Home Tuition.
- Where persistence absence has been identified parents/guardians will be asked to attend a Governors Attendance Panel ([see section 6](#)).
- Penalty Warning letters will be sent if there is no improvement in attendance within a set period of time.
- Where there is no response to attendance intervention and where the absence or pattern of absence has persisted without explanation, the school will formally involve the Local Authority Children's Services which may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution proceedings started by the Local Authority. ([see section 8](#))

### **Illness**

It is the school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note, telephone call or personal

visit explaining that their child is or was ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested. However school can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if we have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90%
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- A pattern of the day(s) in which absences happen is developing
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support or to provide support

### **Five Day Absence**

For prolonged or frequent periods of absence through illness where the school isn't satisfied that there is a genuine medical reason the school may request medical proof in the form of letters from consultants, doctor/hospital appointment cards or copies of prescription labels.

### **Ten Day Absence**

Students who are absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be brought to the attention of the Local Authority by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Missing Education Officer (CME). The school will include details of any actions that they have taken.

### **Truancy**

Where a student has been found to have either left the school premises without permission or has failed wilfully not to attend school without a justifiable reason, sanctions of at least a two hour after school detention will be put in place with parent/guardians being duly informed.

### **A Welcome Back**

On return from an absence all students will be made to feel welcome. This will include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students. Students will be directed by their form tutor to proactively ask subject teachers about missed work and complete during break & lunchtimes in the school library.

### **Lateness**

Parents/guardians are required to bring their child(ren) to school on time, every day. Students should be on school premises, ready to come into the school building, by **8.40am** when the school bell rings. Morning registration will take place at **8.45 am**.

Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be entered as late before registers closed.

The registers will remain open until **9.05**. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence and late minutes added unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

When a child is late they will need to enter the school via the main school reception area. Their lateness will be recorded in the 'Late Book' and a reason for lateness will also be recorded. The Attendance Officer will then transfer this information to the class register on SIMs

Children who are late miss a great deal of the school curriculum and can feel uncomfortable about joining their class late; this can result in damage being caused to their self-esteem. They also miss out of vital day-today information & parental letters.

Where students are frequently late without an acceptable reason in the first instance parents/guardians will be informed by telephone or letter and if lateness continues sanctions e.g. lunchtime isolation will be put in place and parents notified. Where lateness becomes of serious concern the Local Authority Access & Inclusion team will be informed.

## **5. PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education by achieving good attendance of 95% or above.

### **BRAG System**

Every term attendance data is collected and colour coded according to the percentage attendance figure:

100%	95% and above	94.99% - 90%	Less than 90%
BLUE	GREEN	AMBER	RED

At the beginning of each half-term the BRAG data is issued to form tutors who notify students of their previous term's attendance figure to record in their planners. Form tutors will interview any students who are in the AMBER zone with attendance between 94.99% but above 90% to identify any underlying issues and reiterate the importance of good attendance.

### **We reward improvements and achievements by:**

- Presenting students who achieve above 99% attendance at Beacon Hill Community School with an Excellent Attendance Certificate in assembly and entrance into a prize draw at the end of each term.
- Awarding whole year certificates and rewards for 100% and improved attendance (moving from below 90% to above 95%) at annual Awards Evening.
- Presenting top form attendance certificates each half term.
- Praise/encouragement to all good and improved attendees by form tutors.
- Sending home praise postcards or text messages for improved or 100% attendance.
- Holding assemblies on the topics of attendance & punctuality.

## **Attendance Targets**

In addition to individual student attendance targets the school will set a whole school attendance target each year in line with Local Authority targets currently set at **95%** and above. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be maintained and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

## **6. GOVERNOR ATTENDANCE PANEL**

Parents/guardians of students whose attendance gives cause for concern may be invited to attend a Governor Attendance Panel. An attendance panel is a formal meeting to discuss the child's school attendance, identify barriers to regular school attendance and agree a target and action plan to improve school attendance.

An attendance panel is chaired by a school governor or senior member of school staff. School representatives will be present this may include anyone in school who is involved with your child for an example a learning mentor. A representative from the Local Authority Access & Inclusion team may also be present.

## **7. HOLIDAY ABSENCE**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "*exceptional circumstances*". This also applies to family holidays.

Under the new legislation the following absence requests will not meet the criteria for approval:

- Family holidays due to convenience (for example because of parental work commitments, holidays taken at cheaper times of the year etc.)
- Visiting relatives
- Family Day Trips (to exhibitions, concerts etc.)
- Visiting family/friends who have different holidays
- Birthdays
- Minding the house
- Resting after a late night

The decision about what constitutes an exceptional circumstance is up to the Headteacher but would include, for example, bereavement and legal matters. It most definitely will not be routinely given for family holidays.

The Headteacher will also take into consideration a student's previous attendance record and timing of the absence.

Parents/Guardians are expected to submit an Exceptional Circumstances Absence request form well in advance seeking authorisation prior to planning any absences.

### **Exceptional circumstances could include:**

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

- 3.** The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- 4.** To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- 5.** Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, consultation will be made with the LA Inclusion Officer for Attendance.

If request is declined, and parents/legal guardians still take their child(ren) out of school, the Local Authority may issue a £60 penalty notice for each child taken out of school during term time.

## **8. LEGAL ACTION TO ENFORCE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Legal proceedings and penalty notices<sup>ii</sup> are used to ensure the regular attendance of students. The Local Authority & schools can use various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason. Any of following may be put in force:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a ‘penalty notice’)
- prosecution

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>