



Berkswell C of E School *Attendance Policy – September 2015*

Introduction and background

Berkswell C of E Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave our school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance in the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers via a posted letter, each term, should their child's attendance fall below 90%.
- Celebrate 100% by awarding books as prizes at the end of the school year.

Understanding types of absence

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.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reasons, such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes

- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the Family and Children's Mentor or the Educational Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 10.00am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call
- Or they can call into the school office.

If your child is absent we will

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Headteacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 85%.

The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a 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, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **8.50am** and we expect our children to be in the playground before this time ready to line up when the bell is rung. Registers are marked by **8.55am** and your child will receive a late before registers are closed mark if they are not in by that time. At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

Holidays in Term Time

The 2013 amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. The amendments set out that **headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are "exceptional circumstances". This applies to the term after your child turns 5.

All planned leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent / carer should complete an absence request form from the school office and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. A requirement is to provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and a possible meeting with the Headteacher. Only exceptional circumstances will be granted.

The school will comply with the Department for Education guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays, child minding, holidays and other similar activities.

Parents are expected to make appointments for the dentist, doctor or optician outside of school hours. In the case of a medical emergency then an absence will be authorised.

Department for Education guidelines make it clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as **exceptional**. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state that where a pupil has been granted extended leave of absence and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable cause, he / she may be deleted from the school roll.

The regulations also state that if the absence is not authorised, then the pupil may be deleted from the school roll after 20 school days.

The Government has introduced these regulations as evidence indicates:

- Poor attendance and persistent lateness disadvantages children;
- Good attendance enables children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available;
- In the early stages of education pupils' attitudes are strongly influenced by those of parents / carers. It is therefore essential that parents set a good example to children by actively valuing good attendance and punctuality.

Where a request for **leave of absence** has been made and the school have sent written notification to parents that the absence will be unauthorised **a penalty notice** will be issued where **the trigger of 10 sessions** of unauthorised absence is met.

In all other cases of unauthorised absence accrued overtime a **Warning letter** will be issued by the Education Welfare Service prior to a penalty notice. The trigger for a Warning letter will be at **least 10 sessions** of unauthorised absence.

A penalty notice may be issued, subsequent to a Warning letter, if there are a **further five sessions** or more unauthorised absences.

People responsible for this policy and its implementation

Headteacher and the Governing Body

Targets

96% attendance target

Absence Letters (see appendix)

If a child has an absence record of less than 90% a letter is sent home to parents by post explaining the educational and legal implications of extended absences.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

T Drew

September 2015

Policy is due to be reviewed September 2016

APPENDIX 1



Berkswell Church of England Primary School

'Inspiring Children to Shine'

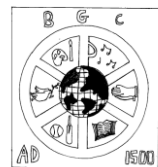
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www.berkswell.solihull.sch.uk Headteacher: Mrs T Drew



International
School Award
2011-2014



Parents' Names
Parents' Address

DATE

Dear Parents' Names,

Pupil's name – attendance in %

As part of our Attendance Policy and in discussion with our Educational Welfare Officer, I write to parents termly if their child's attendance has fallen below 90%. The Department for Education and the Education Welfare Service consider an attendance of below 90% to be of concern, and continued persistent absences will be followed up by the Educational Welfare Officer.

We recognise the fact that children should not be in school if they are ill, however, significant periods of absence are detrimental to educational progress.

I have enclosed a copy of your child's attendance record. I am sure that you will do all you can to ensure he attends school regularly and that we will see an improvement in his attendance this term.

If you should wish to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

T Drew
Headteacher