



# Attendance Policy

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## **Introduction**

We believe that every child at West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School has a fundamental right to be educated with good attendance being the key to personal development, learning and achievement in all areas. Parents, carers and teachers have a duty to encourage maximum attendance at school.

## **The Law on Attendance**

You must make sure your child gets a full-time education that meets their needs (for example if they have special educational needs). You can send your child to school or educate them yourself.

Children must get an education between the school term after their 5th birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16.

The Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their children are 'properly educated, either at school or otherwise'. Children must remain in full-time education for as long as they are of compulsory school age. There is no entitlement for pupils to be granted leave of absence for holidays during term time. Under the Education Regulations (1995), the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. The register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working together to improve school attendance August 2024
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2013) 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

## **Rationale**

At our school we are committed to:

- supporting parents / carers to perform their legal duty;
- encouraging children to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly and in taking pride in their attendance and punctuality;
- working in partnership with parents, carers, our staff team, governing board and the Local Authority to address difficulties and recognise external factors which influence pupil attendance;
- identifying patterns of non-attendance at an early stage and working to resolve personal/social difficulties;
- following efficiently, the school systems for accurate recording and monitoring of attendance and punctuality.

## **Definitions**

### **Authorised Absence**

'Authorised Absence' means that the school has given approval for the pupil to be away from school. Where possible, the school must be notified in advance of this. We appreciate though, that sometimes this is not possible, for instance, when a child is poorly. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be authorised.

(this list is not limited to):

- An absence for sickness
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time
- Religious or cultural observances for days set aside by a religious body, for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency, taken with the school's permission

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An 'Unauthorised Absence' is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the combined permission of both the school and a parent/carer. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school and the school is not satisfied that the reason given for the absence is justified, even with the support of a parent. Should one sibling be poorly and not in school, we would expect to see the other sibling(s) in school if they are well enough.

(this list is not limited to):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the close of registration

- Absence due to unofficial responsibilities at home
- Absence due to birthdays
- Absence due to term-time trips and holidays that have not been authorised by the school
- Leaving school without reason/the school's permission during the day
- Tiredness
- Parent/carer unable to bring child to school

**Persistent absenteeism:**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling during the academic year, for any reason

**Severe absenteeism:**

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling during the academic year, for any reason

**Authorising parental absence requests**

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance using the Absence Request Form (appendix 8). All requests for absence will be handled by the headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

**Leave of absence**

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the headteacher in writing and using the Absence Request Form at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

## **Procedures**

The following procedures are in place and must be adhered to, to ensure that we are able to monitor attendance and punctuality effectively.

### **Registration**

Children must attend school punctually and regularly:

- Nursery start at 8.40am
- KS1 (Reception classes and Years 1 and 2) and KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) start at 8.40am

The school gates open at 8.38am each day and children are expected to be in class by 8.50am when the register will be taken. Registers will close at 8.50am. Any child arriving after 8.50am must be signed in by their parent/carer at the school office and will be marked as late in the register with an 'L' code.

Any arrival after 9.30am will be marked as 'unauthorised absence' with a 'U' code (unless the child is late because of a valid, agreed prior appointment).

### **Attendance Register**

The school uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews

- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code ‘#’ will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Where there is more than one afternoon session, and therefore the attendance register is taken more than once in the same afternoon, the school will use the codes from the last afternoon session as the basis for its statistical attendance data.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

## Reporting an Absence

If a child is absent, these are the methods for reporting this:

- Via the Arbor App which you can download on to any mobile device
- Contacting the school via phone on 01273 770777

For urgent situations, email the office: [admin@wblatch.brighton-hove.sch.uk](mailto:admin@wblatch.brighton-hove.sch.uk), with 'URGENT REASON FOR ABSENCE' in the subject line

Any messages must state the child's full name, class and exact details of all symptoms - 'not feeling well' or 'feeling tired' are not symptoms. This will enable the school to code the absence correctly and ensure safeguarding procedures are also followed.

If your child has minor symptoms for example, sniffles, feeling fatigued, they are expected to attend school. In the event of this being a reason for absence, it is likely that it will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

We will of course monitor all children who may be feeling mildly unwell and contact parents/carers should we feel the need to. Alternatively, should your child wake up poorly and their symptoms improve, they should then be brought to school even though they may have missed morning registration as they will receive their afternoon session mark.

Parents are required to notify the school of their child's absence using the above reporting methods by 8.30am on each day of absence.

<b>RED – STAY AT HOME</b>  <b>Sickness &amp; Diarrhoea</b>  48 hours must have elapsed before a child can return to school from the last episode.	<b>AMBER – COME TO SCHOOL AND COMMUNICATE WITH STAFF</b>  <b>Headache, Feeling Sick, Stomach Ache</b>  Children often feel unwell if they are anxious, if in doubt contact the school for advice.	<b>GREEN – COME TO SCHOOL</b>  <b>Mild cough, Cold, Sore Throat, Feeling Tired</b>  We will always contact you if your child is ill during the school day
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Should we not receive communication by 9.30am, then a text message will be sent to notify parents/carers that their child has not registered in school. In this event, if no communication has been received, the child's absence will be recorded as 'reason not yet provided' ('N' code) on their attendance record.

## Late Attendance

Parents must make every effort to have their children in school at the correct time to ensure they do

not miss key learning. If your child is noted as being late to school frequently, an email will be sent to parents/carers to bring the lateness to their attention as a first stage. If the lateness persists, a formal letter will be sent by the Attendance Officer reminding parents/carers of their responsibility to ensure children arrive at school on time each day. Should there be no improvement, the Headteacher will write personally to the parents/carers and may decide to refer the matter to the Local Authority.

### **Concerns around Attendance and Punctuality**

If we do not receive a telephone voice message, Arbor message or email to front office, by 9.30am, we will send a message to the parent/carer via Arbor requesting the reason as to why the child is not in school. If no response is provided, a letter will be sent out to request further information. If no response is provided from this letter, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (O) code.

If we have previous serious concerns about a child's welfare (for example, the child is on the child protection register or we believe could be in danger), we may request that our Welfare Manager, Natalie Bellis completes an unscheduled home visit. If we continue to have concerns, then we would seek support from other agencies to safeguard the child, including the Police and Children's Services. If there has been absence for 3 days and there has been no communication as to the reasons why, the Welfare Manager will automatically conduct a home visit. If there is no response following this visit, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care (Front Door for Families). The police may also be contacted.

Where attendance is a concern, parents/carers may be required to provide medical evidence when the child returns so that the absence is not recorded as unauthorised. Parents/carers will be notified of this arrangement by letter. See Appendixes 3, 4 and 5. When absence is near or below the persistent absence threshold of 90%, an Attendance Support Meeting will be arranged to discuss barriers to attendance and how all parties can work together to improve attendance. In cases where there is limited or no improvement, a further meeting may be arranged with the Headteacher, Russell Brentnall and a 'Notice to Improve' letter will be sent. The decision following this letter may include a referral to the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, consideration of an Attendance Contract; or referral to our Front Door for Families team to explore external support options.

### **What is a Notice to Improve?**

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a Penalty Notice is issued. If the 10-session threshold for issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice has been met and support is appropriate, but not engaged with by the parent/carer or has not worked, a Notice to Improve should usually be sent to give parents/carers a final chance to engage in support. A Notice to Improve does not need to be issued in cases where support is not appropriate (for example a term-time holiday). The Notice to Improve should include an improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks and contain a clear warning that any unauthorised absence in that period can trigger an FPN or prosecution without further warning (if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period). A Notice to Improve is issued by the school.

### **What is an Attendance Contract?**

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent/carer and either the school (with the exception of independent schools and non-maintained special schools) or local



authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. An attendance contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. An attendance contract is not a punitive tool, it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.

Possible triggers for attendance letters could be as follows, please note this is not an exhaustive list of triggers and each case is considered on its own merit:

- Attendance is below 96%
- Frequent 'Lates' after the register has closed
- Unexplained or unauthorised absences
- Patterns forming regarding absences, for example regular Fridays and Monday absence from school.

### **Collecting Your Child Before the End of the School Day**

We expect your child to attend school for the whole day (i.e. both morning and afternoon sessions). It is recognised however, that there may be some occasions/circumstances whereby it might be necessary to collect your child earlier than 3.10pm. Early collection will only be permitted by prior request/agreement in writing (email) or via phone call from the parent/carer, confirming the reason for the early collection, who will be collecting and the time. In the event one child needs to be collected early, we would not normally expect siblings to be collected at the same time. After School Club should be considered by parents as an alternative to collecting siblings or collecting children for a reason not directly relevant, for example a parent's medical appointment. Parent/Carers are able to book After School Club via the Arbor app.

### **Absence from Learning**

Children should attend school for the maximum number of days possible (190), since absences can have a detrimental effect on their learning.

Parents receive a list of holiday dates at the beginning of each academic year; these can be found on the school's webpage: [West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School - Term Dates](#). Families are expected to take their holidays outside term time. Any request to remove a child from learning during term time for holiday will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. If it is necessary to make a request for Absence from Learning (see Appendix 8 and the school website. Such requests should be kept to a minimum and should not, in any case, exceed two weeks (10 days/20 sessions) during a school year. Your 'Absence Request Form' will either be approved or not; in either case, you will receive an email/letter confirming the outcome (see Appendix 6, 7, 7a, 7b, 7c, for examples of these letters).

Any absence the day before or the day after a school holiday will be unauthorised ('O' code) unless evidence is provided.

Exceptional leave of absence will usually only be authorised if attendance at the time of request is above 96% and is unlikely to fall below 96% as a result of the requested leave. Any Absence from

Learning which builds up to longer than one school week (5 days/10 sessions) in a period of 10 weeks is treated as unauthorised, and may result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **Attendance at Funerals**

Requests for attendance at funeral for family members should be submitted as via an 'Absence Request Form'. To ensure equal treatment throughout the school, only one day's absence will be authorised to attend the funeral service itself, travelling time will not be authorised unless included as part of the day's absence.

### **Attendance at School Open Mornings / Entrance Exams (applicable for Year 6 only during the months of September/October)**

Time off to attend Secondary School Open Mornings or Entrance Exams will be authorised, however, your child is expected to be in school for the other part of the day. Days off for revision prior to the Entrance Exam will not be authorised. Parents should report their child's absence for the morning or afternoon session using the normal Daily Absence Reporting Notification procedure, confirming for which session their child will be absent and which school they will be attending.

### **Strategies for Improving Punctuality and Attendance**

All staff at our school are committed to doing all they can to ensure children attend punctually and regularly. In an attempt to improve rates of punctuality and attendance we:

- talk with parents and carers to identify whether support is needed to get children into school and on time. We signpost parents to the support network of parents local to their home who they may wish to liaise with.
- Use of the pupil premium budget to pay for children to attend breakfast club in order to improve their attendance and punctuality;
- refer children who are causing concern to the weekly Safeguarding meeting held with the Senior Leadership Team
- work with the Attendance Lead/Welfare Manager, Natalie Bellis to ensure all barriers to learning are shared
- Share and discuss individual attendance Registration Certificates during Parents' Evenings. In addition, the child's annual Registration Certificate is sent at the end of the academic year with the child's school report to give a view of the 'whole child' at school;
- keep a record of those who arrive late each day;
- keep a record of parents and carers who have telephoned to explain their child's absence;
- keep a record of parents and carers whom we have telephoned or left a message on the answering service;
- ensure our registers are completed accurately;
- involve governors in our monitoring procedures.
- To track key groups of pupils where absence is a cause for concern
- To ensure a robust screening system is in place to support pupils whose attendance is starting to be a cause for concern

### **Celebrating attendance**

**At West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School, attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers; pupils and staff. For this reason, the school is wanting to ensure methods of celebrating attendance include individuals, classes and groups of children. These can include the following:**

- The class who has the best weekly attendance will be shared in assembly Each class will have chosen an activity they can access, when they are awarded with the highest attendance award.
- Attendance trophy for the class with the highest attendance for the week will be awarded during the celebration assembly each Friday morning
- Certificates provided for improved attendance at the end of each half term
- Gold, Silver and Bronze Attendance certificates provided for the class teachers to give out at the end of each academic year
- Class attendance percentages shared with all teachers to share with their class
- Individualised incentives and rewards for specific groups of pupils
- End of term attendance rewards for pupils who have consistently high attendance
- Reward sessions for the class with the highest attendance for each half term.
- Recognition of those achieving 100% annual attendance using Amazon voucher/other rewards based around pupil voice

We also need to recognise that children getting to school on time and / or attending regularly, is solely down to the responsibility of the parent /carer.

### **Long Term Absence**

When children have an illness which means that they will be away from school for over five days, the school may signpost and encourage children to access online learning where the class teacher will upload work for the child to complete at home. This will very much depend on the nature of the illness and be based on knowledge of the child and their circumstances.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the appropriate support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school. In Brighton and Hove this will be via Children's Services (Front Door for Families); Children Missing Education Team, who may request further information to instigate a referral to the EOTAS team (Education Other Than At School)

### **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Procedures**

Emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA) is a term referring to reduced or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. Rather than the term 'school refusal', the term EBSA recognises that this avoidance has its root in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues. EBSA should not be thought of as a deliberate act of defiance, but instead as a complex issue inextricably linked with mental health and wellbeing.

EBSA also doesn't just mean not attending school entirely. Staff may also observe pupils:

- Not going to their classroom

- Not attending some lessons
- Avoiding some physical spaces or people

### Why does EBSA happen?

There is no one reason why children and young people avoid school. It varies by individual, and is usually caused by a combination of various factors and their interaction, rather than a single cause. Potential risk factors for EBSA can be split into three main categories; the child or young person, the family and home, and the school.

### Some examples of EBSA risk factors could include:

Child/young person	Family/ Home	School
Anxiety, depression or other mental health concerns	High levels of family stress (including financial stress, conflict and domestic violence)	Bullying
Difficulties with managing and regulating emotions	Being a young carer	Difficult relationships with staff members
Trauma and adverse childhood experiences	Loss and bereavement	Difficulties in particular subjects
Low levels of self-confidence and self esteem	Family history of EBSA	Demanding pressurised academic environment
Separation anxiety or attachment issues with a parent/carers	Poor parental mental health	Difficult in making and maintain friendships
Having a special need or a disability	Changes to the home environment	Transition from primary to secondary school through key stages

### What we do to support pupil and families with EBSA:

Although EBSA is a complex issue, positive outcomes are very achievable. There are some strategies outlined here, split into universal approaches and more targeted strategies.

#### Universal

West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School takes a whole-school approach to mental health which has benefits for pupils, staff and families. We involve all members of the school community in promoting and supporting wellbeing. By developing a culture which prioritises wellbeing and is supportive and safe, we can reduce the impact of EBSA risk factors. We have a mental health and wellbeing ambassador (PSHE co-ordinator/welfare manager) who implements wellbeing strategies, assemblies, lessons and activities throughout the school. We have a number of nurture and SEMH (Social Emotional Mental Health) interventions which can support with EBSA. These will be discussed with the parent/carers and pupil to ensure all support is appropriate and accessible.

#### What our staff can do

Keep an eye out for early indicators and start conversations with parents/carers and children.  
Raise any emerging concerns for discussion at the weekly Safeguarding meeting;

As part of regular reviews of attendance data, school staff should try to spot early patterns of absence arising, keeping an eye out for sporadic attendance and lateness. These will also be recorded on CPOMs and signs of any patterns emerging will be explored. Staff are supported with their development of 'professional curiosity' whilst not making assumptions about specific families.

If staff notice these patterns emerging, beginning a dialogue with the child or young person about how they are feeling can help them open up and ask for help.

These conversations can feel difficult or uncomfortable, but will also let a pupil know that they are being listened to and supported.

**Other early indicators can include:**

- A parent or carer reporting that the child or young person does not want to come to school
- Physical signs believed to be linked to stress (e.g. stomach ache, sickness, headache)
- The child or young person often complaining of feeling ill
- Behavioural changes or fluctuations e.g. interactions with others, reduced motivation and engagement in learning tasks

**Protective Factors**

A protective factor is an attribute or condition that can help protect a child or young person against some of the risk factors outlined above, thereby preventing EBSA or reducing its impact.

Developing protective factors isn't something a child or young person can be expected to do alone. Schools play a very important role in developing protective factors in their pupils.

**At West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School...**

- We build a school culture that recognises all emotional reactions as normal and helps pupils feel safe to express their emotions.
- We have nurturing staff who can initiate conversations around EBSA and offer support.
- Our Welfare Manager has a Diploma in Trauma which specialises in attachment aware and trauma informed practice.
- We support children in developing effective emotional regulation strategies, which include Just Right, Active Listening; Emotion Coaching.
- We provide quiet or safe spaces for pupils to access if they are experiencing intense emotions.
- We provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to decision-making in the school, helping them feel that their voices are valued and heard.
- We work together to reduce everyday stressors in the classroom for pupils who easily become overwhelmed.
- We check in regularly with pupils to see whether any agreed adaptations or strategies are working and useful, and adjusting if not.
- The use of the ATTEND framework, is used as a supportive document for any parent/carer/pupil needing to participate in an Attendance Support meeting, however this framework may also have a positive impact at an earlier stage of EBSA

**Positive and supportive communication with families**

West Blatchington Primary and Nursery staff ensure that parents and carers feel connected and involved with the school. This is key to support children and young people's mental health. We understand that due to the coronavirus pandemic and other socio-economic factors, parents and carers may have disengaged from the school community. Some parents and carers may also have had difficult times at school themselves when they were younger, and their confidence in the ability of the school to support their child may be low.

By finding ways to involve them in school life and communicating with them regularly, we build parents' and carers' trust in the school.

We recognise that if the family of the child or young person trusts that the school will be able to support their child, they will be more likely to encourage the child to attend school, as they know that they will be cared for and supported.

The Welfare Manager, Natalie Bellis, is always available for further conversations, if more specific information is needing to be shared.

### **Targeted Support**

#### **Assess**

We keep an eye out for early indicators of EBSA in pupils and act quickly. Work with pupils to identify the risk factors they are experiencing which may be causing EBSA. The Child Outcomes Research

#### **Plan**

Co-produce a return to school action plan with the pupil, family and school all involved in the process. Agree a date of review, and share the plan with all parties involved. If the student is finding the idea of returning to school particularly difficult, the plan could focus on smaller steps – like meeting a friend from school or completing a piece of work – to begin the process of returning to school. Work with the child or young person on a return to school pupil support plan, detailing the support they can expect when they come back to school. Again, share this with all parties. This planning stage may involve other staff members in school such as the SENCo/Deputy Head, and also external professionals such as the Schools Mental Health Service, BHISS (Brighton and Hove Inclusion Support Service).

If a reduced timetable needs to be considered, this will be completed in consultation with the Local Authority. This would be a time limited intervention of up to 6 weeks and always requires the consent of the parent/carer prior to implementation.

#### **Do**

Maintain good communication with the family and pupil during the return to school – for example, supporting the completion of school work at home and sharing feedback on the work. Regular communication with parent/carer/pupil/staff. Ensuring pupil voice remains central to any support being provided.

#### **Monitor and Review**

Monitor the progress made and adjust the plan for the next steps. Further consultation with other agencies may be needed. Supporting parents/carers to access SEND assessments where these are thought necessary.

## **Truancy**

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8.50am and 1:10pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued in line with the [Penalty notices and legal intervention section of this policy](#) where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **Working with parents to improve attendance**

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

### **Persistent absence (PA)**

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent, and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. Front Door For Families, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty



of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may, in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **SEND- and health-related absences**

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Early Help process.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.

- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

### Definitions

Children who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs may include those with:

- Physical health issues.
- Physical injuries.
- Mental health problems, including anxiety issues.
- Emotional difficulties or school refusal.
- Progressive conditions.
- Terminal illnesses.
- Chronic illnesses.

Children who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend any of the following:

- **Hospital school:** a special school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment.
- **Home tuition:** many LAs have home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and pupils on occasions where pupils are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment.

### Local Authority duties

The LA must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The school has a duty to support the LA in doing so.

The LA should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil.
- Ensure the education pupils receive is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.

The LA should not:

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child from getting the right type of provision and a good education.
- Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost.
- Have policies based upon the percentage of time a child is able to attend school rather than whether the child is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.
- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for children or inflexible policies which result in children going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in).

**The School Board is responsible for:**

- Ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Ensuring the **termly** review of the arrangements made for pupils who cannot attend school due to their medical needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents, for both on- and off-site activities.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs are appropriately trained.
- Approving and reviewing this policy

**The Head Teacher is responsible for:**

- Working with the School Board to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils with health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of children.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet pupils' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with healthcare needs and liaises with parents, pupils, the LA, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care.
- Ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual pupils.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with health needs.
- Providing teachers who support pupils with health needs with suitable information relating to a pupil's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil.
- Providing a report to the School Board on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils.
- Notifying the LA when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.

**The SENDCO is responsible for:**

- Dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying pupils' education providers with information about the child's capabilities, progress and outcomes.
- Liaising with the Head Teacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school.
- Keeping pupils informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between pupils and their parents, and the LA.

**Teachers and support staff are responsible for:**

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with health needs to participate fully and ensuring pupils are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason.
- Understanding their role in supporting pupils with health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils through the appropriate and lawful sharing of the individual pupil's health needs.
- Ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency.
- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in the school.

**Parents are expected to:**

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

## **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and this is incorporated within the Headteacher's termly report to Governors. The governing board also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be and that any trends are being identified.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact Natalie Bellis, Welfare Manager or in her absence, a member of the Senior Leadership team. If there is a longer-term concern about the attendance or punctuality of a particular child, this will be addressed via the Attendance procedures and may also include a referral to Children's Social Care (Front Door for Families) and the Local Authority Children Missing Education Team. All efforts will be made to contact the parent/carer.

## **Requests for Pupil Absence from Learning due to Exceptional Circumstances**

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he/ she is a registered

pupil. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the Local Authority prosecuting the parents.

The Headteacher reserves the right to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances. We may ask for confirmation of travel arrangements or other supporting documents.

As a rule, the financial factor when a parent claims that they are unable to afford a holiday during school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Similarly, the nature of a proposed holiday cannot be taken as exceptional circumstances.

We will not usually grant exceptional leave if:

- A child's attendance record is less than 96% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness;
- The period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to or coincides with tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the school calendar.

#### **Fixed Penalty Notices – Brighton and Hove Local Authority**

The national threshold for triggering a Fixed Penalty Notice is met when a pupil has been recorded as having had unauthorised absence for 10 or more sessions (5 or more school days) in a period of 10 school weeks. One or a combination of the following codes count as unauthorised absence:

- N-codes (no reason yet provided for absence)
- O-codes (poor attendance)
- U-codes (lateness after close of registration)

The first fine is £160 *per parent/carer per child*, if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

If a second fine is issued to that parent/carer within a period of 3 school years, the fine is £160 *per parent/carer per child* to be paid within 28 days and there is no reduction if paid within 21 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same child, within 3 years of the first fine being issued. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action could be taken, such as prosecution.

There is no right of appeal once a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, so disputes over how an absence is classified must be settled with the school before the absence is taken.

Full details relating to Fixed Penalty Notice amounts and thresholds can be found in the Code of Conduct on the Brighton & Hove City Council website.

[Code of conduct for issuing fixed penalties regarding school attendance \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-for-issuing-fixed-penalties-regarding-school-attendance)

### **Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)**

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

### **Monitoring and analysing absence**

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The attendance officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a [half-termly, termly and full-year](#) basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also

be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

The board of trustees will ensure staff from different schools within the trust regularly share expertise and collaborate on interventions.

### **Training of staff**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

### **Deletions of names from the admission register**

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A pupil's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when pupils' names are deleted from the admission register. This will be with the exception of pupils whose name has been deleted from the register at or after

the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the most senior year group, unless the LA has requested this information.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

#### **Monitoring and review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96 percent – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the school website.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – First Late Letter

Date

[Parent/Carer Name & Address]

Dear [Parent/Carer]

**Re: [child's name] [class]**

As part of our commitment to improve the attainment of our pupils, we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During this process, we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions. We are therefore, writing to you due to [name of pupil]'s current number of late sessions:

Attendance	<current attendance> %
Number of late sessions	<current AA> %
Number of "unauthorised" lates	<current UA> %

Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:

<b>5 minutes late every day = 3 days of learning lost a year</b>
<b>10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of learning lost a year</b>
<b>15 minutes late every day = 10 days of learning lost a year</b>
<b>20 minutes late every day = 13 days of learning lost a year</b>
<b>30 minutes late every day = 19 days of learning lost a year</b>

We understand that the school mornings can be hectic for many, but when your child is late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. If your child arrives after 9.30am, he/she will have an "unauthorised" absence mark which means that he/she will have an unauthorised absence for that morning session. I have enclosed a registration certificate for your information.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely

-

Natalie Bellis  
Welfare Manager/Attendance Lead  
Enc

-

**Appendix 2 : second Late Letter**

Date

Name & Address of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Dear [name(s)]

**Re: Late Attendance – [child's name]**

I refer to the letter of [previous letter date] sent by our Welfare Manager, Natalie Bellis and note that there has been no improvement in [child's name] late arrivals. He/she has continued to regularly arrive late for school and, so far this year been late on [number] occasions.

Our expectation is that all pupils arrive at school by 8.50am at the latest and I can see that [child's name]'s continues to arrive in school later than their friends. Arriving even a few minutes late, could mean that your child is regularly missing early work and essential instructions. It also means that they do not start the school day by arriving with their friends.

If there are reasons for lateness that would benefit from further discussion, our Welfare Manager, Natalie Bellis will be more than happy to meet with you to explore any issues you may be experiencing.

Please support the school by arranging for [child's name] to arrive in time for the start of school, i.e. before 8.50am. .

I will be monitoring [child's name]'s arrival times for the next 4 weeks and will hope to see a significant improvement. If there is little or no improvement, a meeting will be arranged to discuss what further support can be provided.

If you have any difficulties in ensuring your child attends school on time, please contact Natalie Bellis, Welfare Manager, to discuss the matter in order that we may consider suitable support if necessary/appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Russell Brentnall  
Headteacher

Appendix 3 - First attendance letter

Dear «salutation»

«chosen\_name» «chosen\_surname» DOB: «date\_of\_birth»

At West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School, it is our aim to make sure that every child gets the best out of their education. Part of the school's role is to monitor attendance patterns on a fortnightly basis and make contact with parents and carers where attendance has fallen below the expected 96%. Following the most recent screening, «chosen\_forename»'s attendance is currently «percentage\_attendance»%.

If you are receiving this letter, this may be that your child's absence has taken place earlier on in the academic year, It may also be that you have not been able to provide evidence due to the nature of the absence. Please do not worry – the school has a duty to inform all parents and carers when attendance has dropped. This does not mean that any further action will be taken, it is just a case of letting you know and ensuring we are working in a preventative way to ensure there are no other reasons for absence, which school could support with (friendship issues, anxiety, emotional health and wellbeing difficulties).

For reference, please see the table below which highlights the need to keep attendance high on the schools agenda.

**Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year**

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

**95%: 10 days absence a year**

These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

**90%: 19 days absence a year**

These pupils are missing a month of school per year. The Government classifies pupils in this group as "Persistent Absentees" and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group may face legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

If you have any queries or if there are any ways that you feel the school can support further, please contact Natalie Bellis, our Family Liaison Worker, on 01273 770777.

Yours sincerely

Russell Brentnall  
Headteacher

-

Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may lead to legal proceedings being taken against you by the Local Authority. Alternatively the school may request that the Local Authority issues a penalty notice of £80 per parent per child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the timescale the penalty will increase to £160. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, you may be prosecuted.

## Appendix 4: 2<sup>nd</sup> Attendance Letter

Dear «salutation»

«chosen\_name» «chosen\_surname» DOB: «date\_of\_birth»

Further to our previous letter, I have noticed that «chosen\_forename»'s attendance has continued to decline and is now «percentage\_attendance»%.

As you can appreciate, we are wanting to ensure we are doing all that we can to support «chosen\_forename» to attend school every day so that they can achieve to the best of their ability.

For information, 92% attendance is equivalent to missing 17 days of school per year and 75 lessons. I am sure you agree that when looking at it like this, this means «chosen\_forename» has missed a lot of learning.

### **Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year**

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

### **95%: 10 days absence a year**

These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

### **90%: 19 days absence a year**

These pupils are missing a month of school per year. The Government classifies pupils in this group as "Persistent Absentees" and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group may face legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

The school will continue to monitor «chosen\_forename» attendance and unless there is a significant improvement you will be invited to attend an Attendance Support Meeting to discuss ways of how we can all support «chosen\_forename»'s with coming to school each day.

We fully understand that these absences may be related to illness. If this is the case, it will really help for the school to have any evidence relating to the illness (this could include a prescription, an appointment text, a hospital letter or a doctor's note, etc.) and we can attach this to your child's record. This then enables us to fully understand the absence and ensure it is coded appropriately. **If this evidence is not supplied when your child returns after an illness or medical absence, your child's absence will be recorded as an "unauthorised" absence.**

Please do not hesitate to contact Natalie Bellis, our Welfare Manager, if you would like further support with any attendance issues.

We are confident that we will see an improvement in «chosen\_forename»'s attendance and we will be able to celebrate this with them.

Yours sincerely

Russell Brentnall  
Headteacher

**Under the terms of the Education Act 1996, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may lead to legal proceedings being taken against you by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Alternatively the school may request that the Local Authority issues a penalty notice of £80 per parent per child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the timescale the penalty will increase to £160. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, you may be prosecuted.**

## Appendix 5 – invite to ASM

Dear «salutation»  
«chosen\_name» «chosen\_surname» DOB: «date\_of\_birth»

As you will be aware from our previous two letters, we have concerns with regard to «chosen\_forename»'s attendance.

I am inviting you to attend an Attendance Support Meeting at the school on **date** at **time**, because «chosen\_forename» has not attended school regularly. This meeting will be held with our Welfare Manager, Natalie Bellis.

The meeting will give you an opportunity to discuss any difficulties you are experiencing in ensuring your child attends school regularly. The class teacher will also be providing an overview of your child's learning and progress.

It would also be very much appreciated if you could complete the ATTEND forms that will be sent to you in the post, and bring them to the meeting. This will really help all of us in identifying any key areas that are affecting attendance and how best we can support your child. If you would like your child to attend the meeting, please do let front office know.

It is important that you attend this meeting. If you are unable to attend at the time and date specified, please contact the school office on 01273 770777 and an alternative appointment will be made.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. If you fail to attend this meeting and make no contact with me to arrange an alternative appointment, and should your child's attendance not improve to a satisfactory level, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority to consider legal proceedings against you under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Alternatively, the school may request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice of £80 per parent per child to be paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid within the timescale, the penalty will increase to £160. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, you may be prosecuted.

Yours sincerely

Russell Brentnall  
Headteacher



## Appendix 6 – Approved Absence from Learning

Date

Thank you for your email requesting absence for a holiday during the term time, from.....

As you know, regular attendance at school is vital to a pupil's achievement and success, it is also a legal requirement under the Education Act 1996. Most pupils find it difficult to catch up on school work even after one day of absence.

The local authority's policy is that holidays must not be taken during term time and requests for any holiday will be denied.

However, since this is an exceptional circumstance, after careful consideration, I have decided to agree the request for authorised absence.

Finally, I trust that you will strive to achieve good attendance for your child for the rest of the year and I need to inform you that a further request for leave of absence would be denied. Holiday during term time is only granted for exceptional circumstances. Thank you for your co-operation.

Russell Brentnall  
Headteacher

Appendix 7a – Declined Absence from Learning Letter: no fine

Dear

Thank you for the absence request form requesting absence for a holiday for XXXXX from XXX to xxxxx

As you know, regular attendance at school is vital to a pupil's achievement and success, it is also a legal requirement under the Education Act 1996. Most pupils find it difficult to catch up on school work even after one day of absence.

The local authority's policy is that holidays must not be taken during term time and requests for any holiday will be denied.

After careful consideration, I would like to inform you should XXXXXXX be absent between the above dates, it will show as unauthorised absence with no fine.

Please be reminded that unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, will automatically be referred to the Local Authority who will issue a fixed penalty notice of £160 per parent/per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Finally, I trust that you will strive to achieve good attendance for your child for the rest of the year and I need to inform you that a further request for leave of absence would be denied. Holiday during term time is only granted for exceptional circumstances.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Brentnall  
Headteacher

Appendix 7b: first fine

Name  
Address

Date

Student:

Dear

Thank you for completing the Absence Request form in relation to taking **Pupil Name** out of school for the purpose of reason, from **date to date**

I have considered your application and have to inform you that your application for leave has not been granted.

The Department for Education advised that leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. I am unable to authorise this leave as the reasons stated in the request are not deemed to be exceptional.

If the absence goes ahead, a referral will be made to the Local Authority who will issue you with a penalty notice. This first penalty notice issued will be charged at £160 per parent/per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

I would like to inform you that if there are further episodes of 10 or more sessions (5 days), a second penalty notice may be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same pupil, if these take place within 3 years of the date of issue of the first penalty notice. This will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action can be taken, including considering prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and potentially a fine of up to £2,500

Should you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact the school office on 01273 770777

There is no right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Brentnall  
Headteacher

Appendix 7c: second fine

Dear

Thank you for completing the Absence Request form in relation to taking **Pupil Name out of school for the purpose of reason**, from **date to date**

I have considered your application and regret to inform you that your application for leave has not been granted.

The Department for Education advised that leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. I am unable to authorise this leave as the reasons stated in the request are not deemed to be exceptional.

If this absence from school goes ahead, a referral will be made to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice.

This is the second episode of more than 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a 3 year period of when the first penalty notice was issued on **date to date**. This will be charged at a flat rate of £160 per parent/per child if paid within 28 days.

I would also like to remind you that in a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within these 3 years, alternative action can be taken, including considering prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or a fine of up to £2,500

Should you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact the school office on 01273 770777.....within one week of the date of this letter.

There is no right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Brentnall  
Headteacher

Appendix 7d: court proceedings

Student:

Dear

Thank you for completing the Absence Request form in relation to taking **Pupil Name out of school for the purpose of reason**, from **date to date**

I have considered your application and regret to inform you that your application for leave has not been granted.

The Department for Education advised that leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. I am unable to authorise this leave as the reasons stated in the request are not deemed to be exceptional.

Following the 2 previous episodes of unauthorised absence and fines being issued on **date to date and date to date**, I need to inform you that the national threshold has been met for a third time within these 3 years.

Alternative action will now be taken and may include consideration of prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or issuing a fine of up to £2,500

Should you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact the school office on 01273 770777.....within one week of the date of this letter.

There is no right of appeal in relation to any alternative action taken by the Local Authority.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Brentnall  
Headteacher

## **Requests for Pupil Absence from Learning due to Exceptional Circumstances**

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he/ she is a registered pupil. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the Local Authority prosecuting the parents.

The Headteacher reserves the right to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances. We may ask for confirmation of travel arrangements or other supporting documents.

As a rule, the financial factor when a parent claims that they are unable to afford a holiday during school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

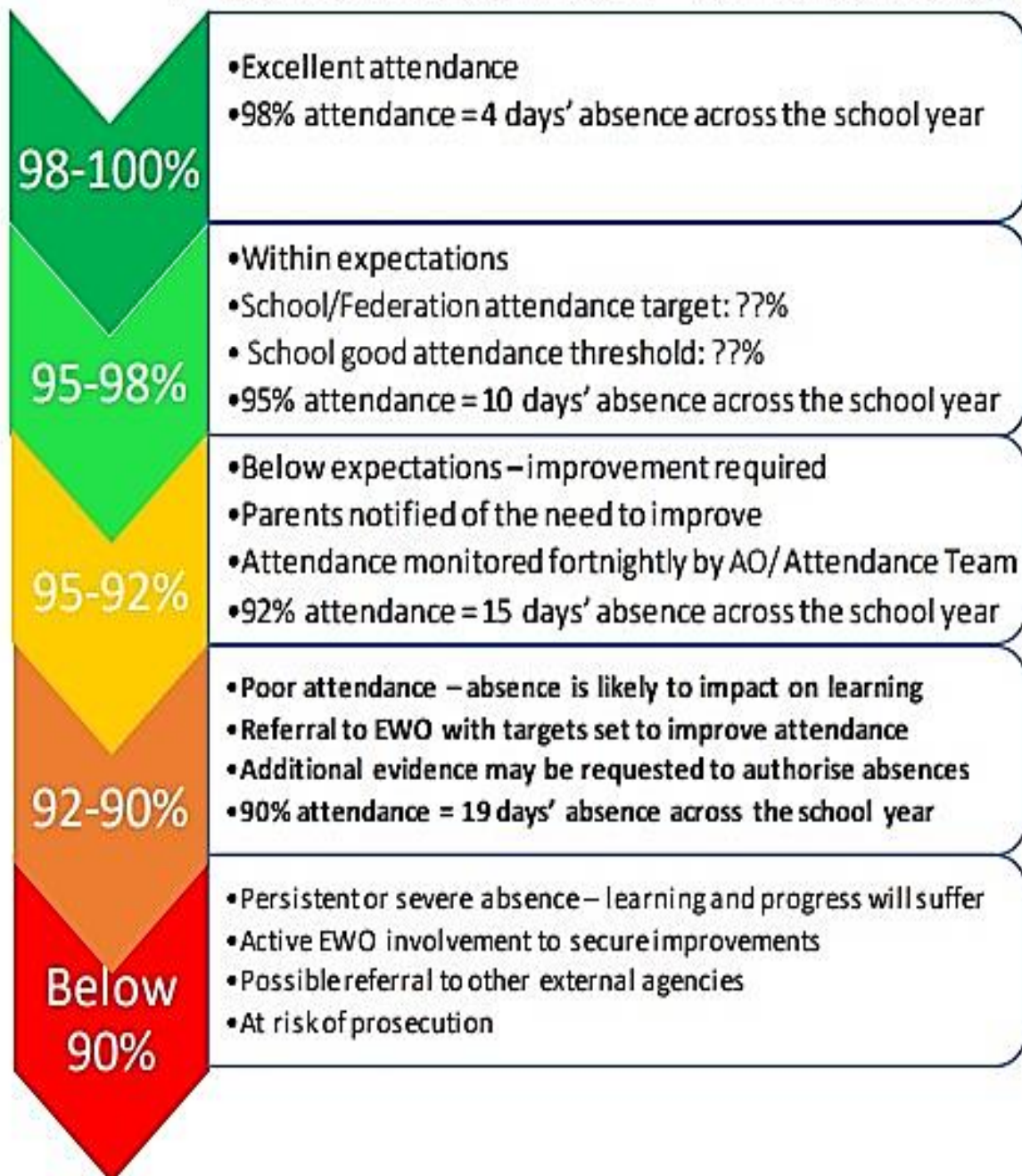
Similarly, the nature of a proposed holiday cannot be taken as exceptional circumstances.

We will not usually grant exceptional leave if:

- A child's attendance record is less than 96% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness;
- The period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to or coincides with tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the school calendar.

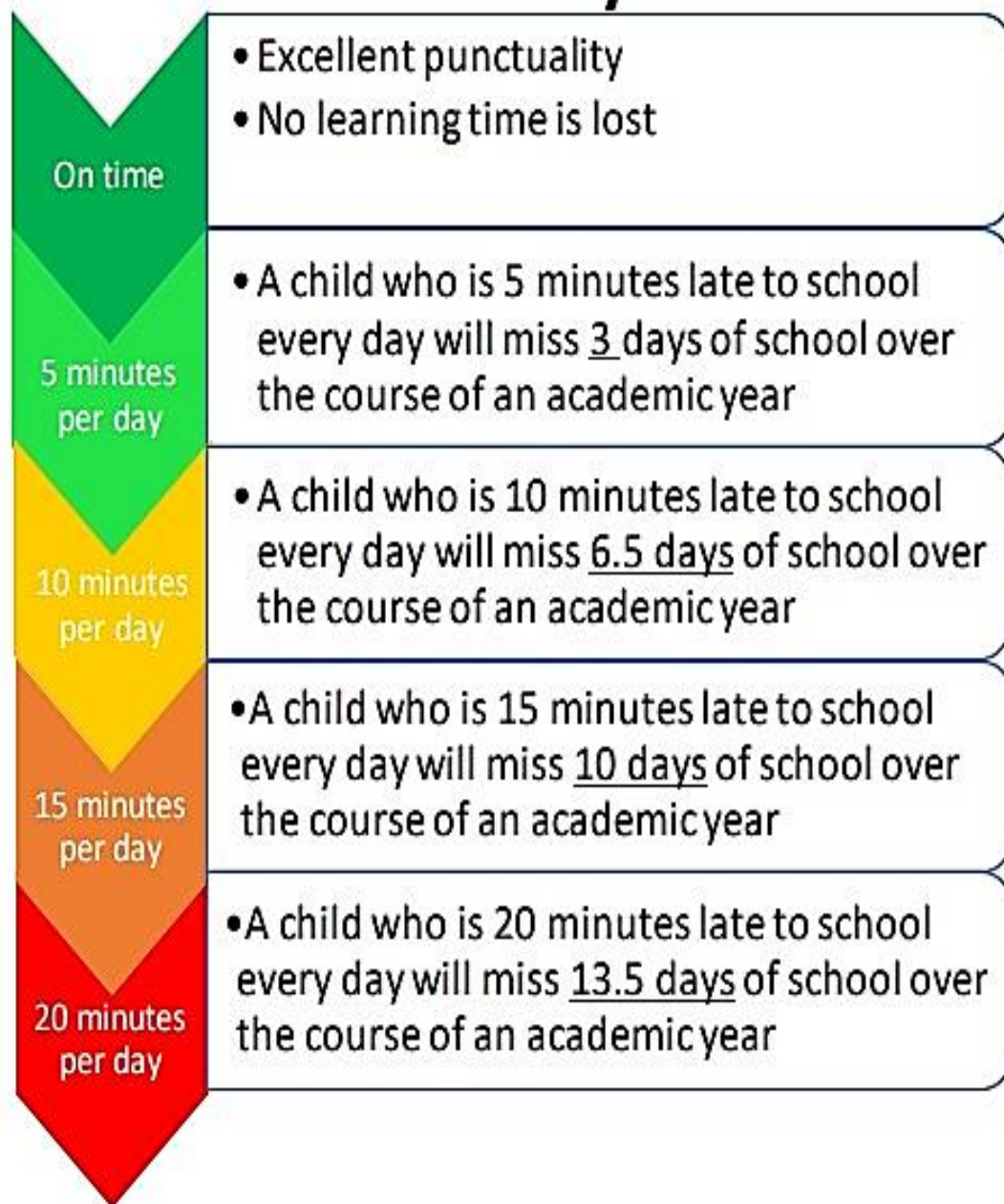
## Impact of Attendance over a Year Chart

# Attendance Matters





# Punctuality Matters



## Appendix 11 – Absence Request Form

Requests for leave of absence during term time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Any supporting evidence must be supplied at the time this application is submitted.

Please complete this form stating the dates of absence, and detailing the reasons why this absence can only be taken during term time.

**The application must be received by the school office two or more school weeks before the first day of absence.** In rare cases, where this may not be possible, please contact school using the following email address which will be forwarded on to the Headteacher:

[admin@wblatch.brighton-hove.sch.uk](mailto:admin@wblatch.brighton-hove.sch.uk).

Permission must be requested and secured before taking any planned absence during term time. If permission is not secured and absence is taken without permission, the Local Authority will issue each parent(s)/carer(s) with a penalty notice, for every absent pupil. The first penalty notice issued to parent/carers in respect of a particular pupil, will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent/carers in respect of the same pupil, within 3 years of the date of issue of the first penalty notice, is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action can be taken, including considering prosecution/fine of up to £2,500 under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

More information about the school's attendance policy can be found on our website:

[West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School - Home](#)

If you are unable to access our website, please speak to the school office who can provide you with a paper copy of the policy.

Name of  
Child(ren):

Class(es):

Name of Parent(s) /  
Carer(s):

Home Address(es):

Contact telephone  
number(s) and e-  
mail address(es):

Sibling(s) and  
school(s) they  
attend:

Reason for leave  
(attach further  
information as  
necessary):

First & last dates of  
absence:

Signed:

*By signing this document, I am confirming that I have read and  
understood the above notice.*

Dated:

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Authorised / Unauthorised:**

**Date of response:**

**Method used to respond to parent:**

**Additional Information/Evidence:**