

Belle Vue Primary & Nursery School



Attendance Policy

May 2021

Rationale

At Belle-Vue Primary School, we believe that every child has the right to an education and that excellent attendance and punctuality play a crucial part in maximising every individual's chance to reach their full potential.

We also believe that for a child to develop their personality, talents and abilities to the full we need to establish the right attitudes and expectations from the children's first experiences of school, to impact on the future of our pupils as citizens, employers and employees.

We believe that persistent lateness hinders children's readiness to learn and may have a detrimental effect on their academic progress as well as their emotional health and well-being.

We follow the Department for Education guidelines for ensuring and encouraging good attendance, expecting children to maintain an attendance figure above 96% throughout the academic year.

Missing lessons makes children vulnerable to falling behind and can contribute to lower attainment at both primary and secondary school.

Good attendance is therefore important for learning because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful transferring from Primary to Secondary school and ultimately higher education and employment.

Good attendance is also essential to ensure your child is adequately Safeguarded

- Your child may be at risk of harm if they are not attending school regularly
- Belle-Vue adheres to 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (July 2018) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Sept 2020) (See also our own Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy) (Sept. 2020)

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility: Parents and carers, pupils and all members of staff.

Celebrating Good Attendance

We reward pupils with good attendance in a range of ways and try to instil a collective and personal responsibility for good attendance and punctuality.

- Each week the class/classes with the best attendance are announced in a celebration assembly

- There is an attendance trophy given to the class with the best attendance each week.
- Attendance awards are given to children whose attendance is between 98% and 100% at the end of a half term.
- At the end of the year the children with attendance between 98% and 100% are given a badge and a certificate.
- Children who have to attend medical appointments during school time will not be detrimentally effected by these absences - they will not count towards overall absence figures for that child.

Recording Absence

The following codes will be used to record absence. These are used nationally. Each day has two sessions: morning and afternoon. The register is completed and school determine which code is given.

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (am)	Present
\	Present (pm)	Present
B	Educated off-site (not dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another code)	Authorised absence agreed by the school in exceptional circumstances
D	Dual registration (ie. Pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity eg. Attending a Language Unit
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday NOT agreed (or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence (only granted in exceptional circumstances)
I	Illness (not medical or dental apt)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before register closes)	Present

M	Medical/dental appointment	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised absence (must be amended once reason for absence is known)
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller/ Roma Absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after register closes)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled session for non-compulsory school-age children	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances eg. School closed due to floods or snow
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Absence Procedures

Short Term Illness

If your child is absent you must contact us as soon as possible, and before 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence and daily thereafter (01384 389900). This must be done every day that your child is ill. Without a doctor's note, length of illness cannot be predicted and must be reported to school daily. Please be aware that our records of parental communication can be presented as evidence for referral purposes.

Long Term Illness

If a child is hospitalised for more than 5 days, we can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that they can work with your child whilst they are not in school. This would mean a child being educated off site. If a child is at home for 2 weeks or more, we can contact Cherry Tree Pupil Referral Unit and they can support your child at home.

Persistent Absence

Persistent Absence is defined by the DfE as children missing whose attendance is less than 90%. The number of children who are persistently absent has to be reported to the DfE.

Where a child's absence has become a concern, whether through a decline in percentage of attendance below 93% or an emerging pattern in their absence, a meeting will be requested with a senior member of staff. The purpose is to discuss reasons for absence and monitor attendance, with a view to seeing rapid improvement. Daily absence calls may also be made by a senior member of staff and records of any meetings or calls will be kept as evidence for any subsequent referrals.

Holiday / Leave of Absence

We follow DfE guidance that says holidays should not be taken during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances allowed at discretion of the Head Teacher. This means that in the vast majority of cases any non-illness related absences will be classed as "unauthorised".

Leave of Absence request forms, available from the school office, should be submitted before any holidays or events are booked, planned or paid for and at least 20 days before it is due to be taken.

Absences considered 'exceptional circumstances' must be requested in writing directly to the Head Teacher at least 20 days before the event.

All leave of absence forms will receive a written reply.

School may notify the EIS (Education Investigation Service) if circumstances justify the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

This may be issued when:

- Leave of absence is taken after an application is refused
- If no application has been made and leave is taken
- Leave has been granted but extended leave is taken without the additional absence being granted by the school
- if the school does not believe the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness

Exclusions

Parents /Carers can be issued with Penalty Notices if a pupil who has been excluded contravenes the details set out in the exclusion letter as to their whereabouts during school hours throughout the duration of the exclusion.

No Contact from Parent

In the event of no contact from a parent or carer the following procedures will be followed:

1st Day of Absence:
School will text asking parents to phone by 10.30 am
If no call is received the school office will make regular calls to the home

<p>Day 2 of Absence:</p> <p>We will continue to call. Other contacts may be called. A member of attendance team may call round in person.</p>
<p>Day 3-6 of Absence:</p> <p>Daily phone calls will be made to all contacts. A visit will be made by the attendance team and a letter of concern delivered.</p>
<p>Day 6:</p> <p>An attendance meeting is scheduled with a senior member of staff</p>
<p>Day 10:</p> <p>The Education Investigation Service will be contacted. A referral will be made for 10 consecutive days off or 9 full days off in a 30 day period or 18 half days in a 30 day period</p>

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. Please note, these fines are not imposed from school and school does not receive any money from these fines. The fines are imposed from the Education Investigation Service on behalf of the local authority. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents/adults with parental responsibility for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age (5-17) attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is available.

Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences. Penalty notices can be issued where a pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school or drops to 90%.

A Penalty Notice is £60, if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120, if paid after 21 days, but within 28 days of receipt. The payment must be paid directly to the local authority, the school does not receive the money. The parent can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired and full payment has not been made. There is no legal right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

Penalty notices remain 'active' for a 12 month period after they have been awarded. Therefore, it is necessary for improvement in attendance to be brought about in order to avoid a fixed penalty notice or court action.

5 Days/ 10 half days of Absence

School are legally obliged to inform the Education Investigation Service if there have been 10 unauthorised sessions (10 half days) of absence in a 30 day period. It is the school's decision whether or not to authorise an absence so please ensure that you liaise closely with the school to keep us informed as to the reason your child is absent. Evidence from doctors or hospital will help us to validate your child's absence.

If parents/carers cannot provide any further evidence regarding child's absence, the school may involve the Health Advisor and parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the Education Investigation Service to discuss how to improve your child's attendance. Following this meeting you may be issued with a Advisory Warning Notice from the Education Investigation Service.

Prescription Medicines can be administered in school where 4 doses are needed in a 24hr period. These MUST be taken to the Main Entrance where a medical form needs to be completed and the medicines locked away securely or refrigerated if required. Consequently, children who are able to return to school but require medication, should not be kept off solely for this purpose.

Criteria for Referrals/Penalty Notices

Referrals to EIS will be made based on the following;

General Unauthorised Absence:

Where unauthorised absence levels indicate that a child has less than 90% attendance a Penalty Notice may be used.

Unauthorised absence in term time:

Where the school's rule on absence in term time (as stated above) and the head teacher has received written notification of a request for a leave of absence and it has been refused, or a leave of absence has been taken for 10 sessions or more, without seeking the absence to be authorised a penalty notice may be issued in conjunction with, or in isolation of any other absence.

Removal from School Roll

If a child is not ill and is persistently absent from our school for above 20 days, as a school we would work with the EIS to find out where your child is, as detailed above. A result of this investigation may be to have your child removed from the school roll. (Section 8 Admissions) It would then be the parent's responsibility to contact admissions in order to re-register the child/children.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

- To maintain a good and positive attitude towards coming to school.
- To try their hardest to come to school every day.

- Be Ready, Be Safe and Be Respectful

Parents

- To ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, in a fit state to learn every day that school is open.
- To notify the school by 9:30am of any absence. Answer machine messages may be left giving a specific reason for absence.
- To take family holidays in school holiday periods, not during term time.
- To provide letters/doctors notes where prolonged absence occurs.
- To ensure that the school have up-to-date contact details e.g. when mobile phones are replaced.

Teachers

- To ensure that attendance registers up to date and completed at 8:55am and 1pm/ 1.30 pm respectively.
- To praise pupils for continued and improved punctuality and attendance.
- To notify Attendance Team and SLT of concerns regarding absence or lateness particularly when it is having a detrimental impact upon progress.

Senior Leadership Team

- Named member of staff responsible for attendance – Claire Davies, Deputy Headteacher
- Named member of staff to report to Head Teacher and Governors termly in attendance issues.
- Set clear and challenging targets for attendance and punctuality for whole school, classes and individuals.
- To intervene early and make persistent efforts when individuals give cause for concern.
- Follow the school's procedures in the event of persistent or prolonged absence.
- Utilise further professional bodies when improvements are not seen in relation to attendance below 90% or prolonged absence.
- Records to be kept of communication with parents whenever it occurs.

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