



# Attendance Policy

Bramley Church of England Infant and Nursery School

"Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path." Psalm 119(105)  
Rooted in Christian values, seek within, wonder why, reach out, aim high.

**Policy effective from** June 2022

**Approved by** Local committee

**Last reviewed on** December 2023

**Next review due by** June 2024

## Version history

| Version | Description of change                  | Author       | Approved                   |
|---------|--|--------------|----------------------------|
| 2.0     | Reformatted and language standardised. | Shona Taylor | FGB                        |
| 1.0     | Original version.                      | Shona Taylor | Shona Taylor, January 2020 |
|         |  |              |                            |

## Introduction

It is the task of the adults at Bramley Church of England Infant and Nursery School (the School) to promote and support children's learning and enable each one of them to achieve their full potential. Members of staff will endeavour to provide a school day that excites, challenges and motivates each child, and allows them to develop as independent learners. The School's organisation of their learning will promote enjoyment, perseverance and self-discipline. The School encourages the children to achieve personal excellence in all aspects of work and behaviour.

The School's staff, alongside the Local Authority (LA), firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Members of staff know that every day of education lost can have a serious impact on children's attainment and overall progress in school. Members of staff will do all they can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

## Key Objectives

### **The School expects that all pupils will:**

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually; and
- attend school appropriately prepared for the school day.

### **The School expects that all parents/carers will:**

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school;
- discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or senior staff, any problems that deter their child from attending school; and
- avoid taking holidays in term time.

### **The School expects that the School's staff will:**

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every child's attendance using Arbor;
- contact parents as soon as possible when unexplained and/or prolonged absence occurs and obtain notes authorising the absence;
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming and safe learning environment for children;
- meet with the School's Inclusion Officer regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases;
- meet with the parents of children whose attendance causes concern; and
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service;

## **Leave of Absence**

The School's holiday dates are published a year in advance and parents/carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence will not be granted for holidays to be taken in term time.

In exceptional circumstances when leave in term time is unavoidable, or when children are required to attend medical appointments during school hours, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The Leave of Absence Request Form can be obtained from the school website or school office.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

The Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional.

Should absence be taken without the Headteacher's authorisation the case will be referred to Inclusion Service and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

## **Children in Reception who are not yet five years**

Requests for leave of absence will be treated in line with the rest of the School. As the child is on the school role the attendance will be treated as unauthorised. If the child is not of statutory school age the parents would not be issued with a penalty notice for the five days. Guidance from the Inclusion Service concerning penalty notices may be sought after more than five days unauthorised attendance for these children.

## **Responding to Non-Attendance**

When a pupil does not attend school, staff will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note/email or telephone call is received from the parent/carer, the School will endeavour to contact them and other given contacts that day via a telephone call.
- If there is no response to a telephone call, or the absence remains unexplained or still a concern, the office will inform the Headteacher. Further investigation and action will be taken accordingly to safeguard the child.

## **Absenteeism**

### **Persistence Absence (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level means children are missing 19 days or more a year of schooling, equivalent to half a day each week. This is doing considerable harm to any child's educational prospects, and we expect parents/guardians/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the headteacher.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent absence.
- Liaise regular with families during periods of absence, including inviting families to attend meetings to discuss this.
- Identify barriers to school attendance.
- Offer support strategies including HSLW and ELSA support if appropriate.

### **Severe Absence (SA)**

Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school, at this level of absence a child cannot be expected to make progress in line with their peers and this is detrimental to their future life and employment prospects.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services for child and family to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Analyse and evaluate the impact of strategies to help the child reintegrate back into school.
- Once back in school, identify key interventions to support lost learning.

### **Responding to lateness**

When a pupil is late for school they should enter the building via the front office so that they can be recorded as being present. Registers for the main school open at 8.35 a.m. and are taken promptly. Children arriving in school after 8.45 a.m. should enter via the office. Children will be recorded as being late (L coded) if they arrive after 8.45 a.m. but before 8.50 a.m, when the registers close. Any child arriving after 8.50 a.m. will be recorded as late after close of register (U coded) and this denotes an unauthorised absence. A monthly late report is compiled by the office staff and given to the Headteacher to analyse.

Persistent lateness will be monitored, and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Inclusion Service.

### **Changing School**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the School roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;

- the address of the new school;
- the new home address (if appropriate and known).

The pupils' school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.

### **Penalty Notices**

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the LA must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

### **Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued**

Pupils identified by Police and Inclusion Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

**The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**

Where a child is taken out of school for **5 days or more** and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below **90%** and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

### **Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions**

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

### **DELETIONS FROM REGISTERS**

Schools to be aware there is legislation around taking children off roll (Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and 2013.

- If a child moves schools during the year, they come off roll on the day they start the new provision.
- If the parent puts in writing that they intend to home educate, the matter should be referred to EHE and a copy of the letter attached. If the case is open to Inclusion a copy of the letter should be provided to the IO. The child can only be taken off roll if the parent specifies in writing that they intend to home educate.
- If the parent advises that they are moving abroad and school have any reason to suppose that this might not be true they should refer the matter to the Inclusion Service to investigate. Otherwise it is good practice to request this advice in writing from the parent so that this letter can be placed on the school file in explanation for taking the child off roll.

### **DELETIONS AFTER CONTINUOUS ABSENCE OF NOT LESS THAN 20 SCHOOL DAYS**

When taking children off roll due to twenty days absence and in order to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the Education Act 1996, guidance states that schools **must** ensure that the following applies:

That the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and

- (i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised
- (ii) the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
- (iii) both the school **and** the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.

If any parts of this are not complied with, the pupil cannot be taken off roll and this may result in the school being vulnerable to legal action and having to put the pupil back on roll.

In the case of a pupil where the parent has requested a leave of absence of over twenty school days it is important that the school notifies the parent in writing that failure to return within the twenty days could result in the pupil being taken off roll. Once the absence begins, and within the twenty days, even if the school believe that the family are not at home, they must endeavour to make enquiries with the family and are advised to write to the home address stating that if the pupil does not

return by a specified date, they will be taken off roll. At the same time, a referral should be made to the Inclusion Officer, as representative of the LA, for enquiries to be made.

If the pupil does not return by the specified date and enquiries have been made, the pupil can be taken off roll and the parents should be notified. It is not enough just to warn parents that the pupil may be taken off roll, enquiries must be made by school and the LA.

It is recommended that an entry is made in the School Attendance Policy to state that pupils may be at risk of losing a school place in cases of unauthorised absence.

For further information regarding when children can be taken off school's roll please contact your IO or the SW Inclusion Service on 01483 518187.

### **Non-starters**

In DfE Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice on School Attendance (August 2013) it advises that if a school is expecting a child to arrive at the beginning of term, the child MUST be put on the Admissions and Attendance register.

In the event of the child not arriving, the child must be marked as absent and enquiries made with Admissions. If Admissions confirm that the child has started at another school, the child can be taken off roll. However, if there is no record of the child starting anywhere else, school must refer to the Inclusion Service for a visit to be made and appropriate action can be taken to enforce attendance or establish what provision is being made.