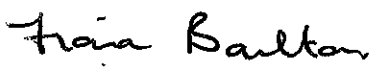


September
2018

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by governors:	16 th October 2018
Signed	 Mrs F Boulton, Chair of Governors
For review:	September 2020

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

BALDWINS GATE CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Baldwins Gate CE (VC) Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Baldwins Gate Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Our target for attendance is 96%.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues (and their siblings).
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.

All children can sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The attendance and behaviour policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child, or have general concerns about the absence, to the local authority/Education Welfare Service.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities :

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from your GP if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily eg because they had a late night or non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Children who arrive at school after registers have closed.
- Looking after other children or accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments.
- Their own or family birthdays.
- Holidays during term time.
- Day trips.
- Shopping trips.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.

Persistent absence

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing around 10% or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period.

Admissions Register

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Education Welfare

Register checks are undertaken to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). The school are able to work with the Education Welfare Service to improve attendance. A member of the Education Welfare Service visits school on an annual basis to conduct an inspection of the school's registers.

Attendance Data

The governing body receives regular reports on attendance and absence figures. In a small school it is particularly important to make sure that the average percentage attendance figure does not mask significant differences in individuals' attendance. If there is a very small number of pupils who are persistent non or low attenders, governors may consider the attendance figure without these pupils' attendance. If the attendance figure is above average without these pupils then it is reasonable to consider an overall attendance grade of average. Governors will consult with staff to ascertain whether these pupils are being given the appropriate amount of support and challenge to improve their attendance, and whether this is being effective.

Procedures

School starts at 8.55 am. Children should be on the school playground by 8.50 am ready for lining up and going into school for registration.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Service at Staffordshire County Council. They will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Arriving Late

We actively encourage children at Baldwins Gate Primary School to arrive at school on time and to try to work in partnership with parents to ensure this. Lessons at Baldwins Gate Primary School start promptly and valuable learning can be missed by arriving late.

If your child is late for no valid reason, that counts as unauthorised absence.

Pupils arriving late cause disruption in the classroom and to office staff. If a parent/carer is aware that they are going to be late and have a valid reason then we ask that the following procedure is followed:

- Ring the school (as soon as possible) so that class teachers can be informed and prepared for the late arrival of the child.
- Parents and pupils who arrive late should come to the school office to register and sign in the 'Late Registration' book providing a reason for lateness.
- Children arriving at school up to 30 minutes after the register is taken will be recorded as L for late.
- Children arriving after 9.30 am will be recorded as U for unauthorised absence.

If children do arrive after 8.55 am, parents must bring the children to the main entrance of the school and sign them in. If there is a persistent trend in lateness parents will be contacted by letter and the Education Welfare Service may be involved.

Absence from School

Parents should inform the school as soon as possible if they know their child is not going to be present. If a child is not in school and we have not heard from parents by 10.00 am, a phone call will be made to parents.

Attendance is monitored termly. Teaching staff are provided with attendance data and any concerns regarding attendance can form part of parental consultation.

Where concerns arise over unauthorised attendance, the Headteacher will write to the parents setting out the school's concerns with a request for a parental consultation.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Medical Appointments

Children attending medical appointments during the school day should be signed in and/or out at the school office. Parents are encouraged to try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

Our attendance target for 2018/2019 is 96%.

Pupils who achieve 100% attendance at the end of the academic year are recognised with a certificate and small prize.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

First day contact is the responsibility of the school office. The school bursar will conduct all first day absence calls. It is the responsibility of the office staff to ensure all reported absence is recorded correctly and for checking all late children report to the office and that their attendance is recorded correctly.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

In 2013 the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Guidance on authorised absence

The decision to authorise absence is at the headteachers discretion based on their assessment of the situation. It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. By way of guidance:

- Absence during term time for holidays is not considered an exceptional circumstance.
- Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill close family members, this would not be for an extended period.
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.

Guidance notes for parents requesting leave in term time are available and attached as Appendix 1.

Any request for leave during term time should be made using the form attached as Appendix 2. Forms should be completed and sent to school at least four weeks before the anticipated start date. Should the school decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**,

In an effort to address poor attendance and unauthorised absences from school (including absence due to a holiday during term time), school could contact the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty notice fine of £60 **per parent* per child**. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.

Performance Work Absences

Any pupil involved in television, filming, theatre, photographic work or a sporting event will need either a licence or an exemption from the licensing procedures. Either a licence or a letter of exemption will be issued by the licensing authority which must by law be informed of the details of any performance involving children.

Exemption Application

Exemption letters are issued to the organisation arranging the performance if the child(ren) meet(s) the following criteria:

- Will not miss any school time
- Is not being paid
- Will not have performed on more than 4 days within a 6 month period
- If the child is not being filmed

License Application

Performance licences are issued to children where:

- A child must miss school in order to take part
- The child is being paid
- The child has or will perform on more than 4 occasions within the previous 6 months
- If the child is being instructed whilst being filmed

Please note Staffordshire County Council require your Exemption or License application 21 days prior to the first day of the performance – if this is not the case, please call ahead of sending in the application to discuss if it will be possible for the application to be processed in time for the first day of the performance.

The person responsible for the performance is responsible for submitting the entertainment license application.

You can contact Staffordshire County Council at:

Children in Employment & Entertainment
Staffordshire Place 1
Tipping Street
Stafford
ST16 2DH

email: ew.statutoryactions@staffordshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01785 278 927 / 277 409 / 276 937

Before granting a performance licence for a child to participate in TV, theatre and/or modelling work, the Local Authority will contact the Headteacher to ensure that a pupil's education will not suffer as a result of the granting of such a licence. The school will authorise the Local Authority to grant a 'performance licence' for a maximum of 5 days absence per academic year, subject to attendance at the time of application, being above 95%.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Baldwins Gate CE (VC) Primary School
Guidance notes for parents requesting leave in term time

1. Parents who want the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully, **complete the attached form and send it to the head teacher**. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision regarding their request. Head teachers cannot authorise any leave of absence unless the request is received before the period of absence begins.
2. The Department for Education makes it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers now also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
3. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time.
4. Staffordshire County Council understands the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays particularly during school holidays. However, we believe that, in order to ensure children receive the best education and prospects, that they should be in school during term time.
5. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements
 - frequency of similar requests
 - whether the parent made the request in advance
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
6. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The head teacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. However head teachers may choose to liaise with each other as part of their decision-making process.
7. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence, but the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
8. Should the school decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**, which may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £60 **per parent* per child**. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.
9. The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school absences during term time and support head teachers in challenging parents who ignore the law.

* Generally the DfE states that parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.



Baldwins Gate CE (VC) Primary School
Request for leave during term time

To: The Headteacher, Baldwins Gate CE (VC) Primary School Date.....

I request a leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name)

for the period from (date) to (date)

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are: -

.....
.....
.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s))School(s) attended

.....

.....

(Signature of 1st parent/carer(s)Print Name.....

(Signature of 2nd parent/carer(s) Print Name.....

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time(this academic year)

Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Rationale to decline request :

SignedHeadteacher Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carer.....