

Blackfell Primary Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

At Blackfell Primary School, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are important in helping students achieve the best that they can be. Students should be at school on time dressed in accordance with the school uniform policy, and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community including students, parents, governors and staff.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a student is required to attend regularly at school, should a student fail to attend regularly legal action may be taken. A *parent(s)* may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice or could be fined up to £2,500, face three months in prison and receive a parenting order. An Education Supervision Order could be sought.

- The school is required to complete a register twice during the school day. This is once at the start of the school day, 8.55 am, and again for the afternoon session at 12.45 pm for Reception and 1pm for Year 1 – Year 6
- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence. It is for the school to determine if an absence is to be authorised (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

Education Law defines a *parent* as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child on a daily basis.

It is important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the student that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community including students, parents, governors and staff.

School will:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence in order to act early to address patterns of absence.
- keep parents fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record and follow up unexplained absences by text phone calls and letters as necessary
- contact parents on the first day when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason, via the School's electronic messaging system
- take timely action on any problem notified to us and involve appropriate outside agencies in order to support students and their families. This may include a 'home visit' or a request to the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' welfare visit.

Students will:

- will aim to achieve 100% attendance each academic year
- attend school daily.
- will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.

- will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.
- will go to registration and lessons on time.
- will take responsibility for registering at the school office if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Parents will:

- support the school and their child in aiming for 100% attendance each academic year.
- ensure their child attends school daily and on time (i.e. by 8.55 am each morning).
- ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, dressed in accordance with the school uniform policy, fully equipped, with a positive attitude to learn.
- notify the school before 9.15 am of any absence.
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- ensure the school has updated contact numbers.
- will actively work with the school staff and relevant multi-agency staff, to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur.

Appendix 1 Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance

Appendix 2 Procedures

Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.

Under the 2006 Education Regulations **it is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day.** Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill

School starts at 8.55am when all students should be in their classroom in preparation for the register being taken at 8.55am. At this time students should collect items for the day and make sure that they are aware of any changes / arrangements to the day's activities. The afternoon register is taken at 1300. It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions.

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities

- Link courses or approved education off site

PROCEDURES

Under the 1996 Education Act parents commit an offence if the child does not attend school regularly. If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone. If no message is received we will make every effort to contact you.

It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. In cases where we continue to be concerned we may make a 'home visit' or request the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' welfare visit. Parents are encouraged to ensure that their child brings in a letter confirming the reasons for the absence when the child returns to school if they have not contacted the school office.

The school will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. If a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell the school may request supporting evidence: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence.

The school may choose not to authorise absence without this supporting evidence as it is for the school to determine if an absence is to be authorised (Regulation 7 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.)

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance and submit a copy of the appointment card. The absence will be marked unauthorised if the parent fails to submit the appointment card.

We will closely monitor your child's attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue. The school undertakes a range of measures to support students where attendance is an issue. Where we fail to see an improvement in a student's attendance it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the student receives the support required. It is important that parents work with the relevant external agency in order to improve their child's attendance.

If your child is experiencing difficulties you should contact the school at an early stage and work together with staff in resolving the difficulties. This is nearly always successful.

If the difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service they will assess the case to determine the appropriateness of use of statutory enforcement procedures i.e. Fixed Penalty Notices, Magistrates Court or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment a parenting order can also be imposed.

Punctuality/Lateness

Students who arrive after registration must be brought in to the school office by an adult. After the close of registration with no valid reason this will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded "U" in the register. Parents of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents will be invited to attend a meeting in school and discuss the problem. If the lateness continues a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Service and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued or ultimately the parent could be prosecuted.

It is important to note that any student who arrives to school after 9.30am will be marked with a letter 'U' in the register. This means that, despite being in school, they will technically be marked absent from school for the morning

sessions. It will be recorded on the register as an unauthorised absence and could result in the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notice.

Holidays in term time

The 2013 amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 makes clear that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. The Headteacher has the discretion; in exceptional circumstances to authorise short periods off school.

Applications for Leave of Absence where dates can be known ahead must be made at least 6 weeks in advance of the requested date.

Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached by the Headteacher; on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its individual circumstances.

Any leave of absence that has been declined or the parents has not sought approval for will be recorded as unauthorised. These cases will be referred to the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued to each parent for each student.