

# **Blackwell First School Attendance Policy**

**February 2017**



**Produced by Solihull Education Improvement Service**

## Vision

**At Blackwell we aim to educate the whole child and to ensure children are happy, healthy and fulfil their potential in terms of the development of skills for life, social and moral values and academic success.**

### RATIONALE

Poor attendance disadvantages children.

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.

Children whose attendance is good will be rewarded regularly.

Improved attendance and time keeping will be recognised.

Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (section 444) to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement.

Attendance is a key whole-school improvement issue: it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the school.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

### AIMS

- To maintain and improve the overall attendance of children at school.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To encourage parents to ensure that children arrive at school on time.
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, pupils, teachers and governors.

### Who is responsible for attendance issues in school?

- The School has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues, who should work closely with the designated safeguarding lead where there are attendance concerns. (Headteacher- Anna Moss with administrator responsible for attendance Mandy Hargreaves).
- Members of school staff both teaching and non-teaching have responsibility for attendance issues in school. **See [Appendix 1](#) for a detailed breakdown of these roles and responsibilities.**

- Attendance matters are reviewed by the head and members of the senior management team.
- Attendance issues are reported at least termly to the Governing body.

### **School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The Local Authority provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns. [\(Appendix 2\)](#)

The attendance lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Registers**

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately.

Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

**Blackwell First School procedures for maintaining registers including the procedures for marking registers:**

<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>
<b>1.</b> Registers <b>must</b> be taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>2.</b> On each occasion a school must record whether a child was present, absent or present at approved educational activity.	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>3.</b> Pupils should only be marked present if they are in the room when the register is called.	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>3.</b> Spaces must not be left in the register	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>4.</b> Additional requirements about times, school procedures etc.	<b>8.30am registration- teachers 9am registers close- teachers 9am First Day calling- administration</b>
<b>5.</b> Ensuring pupils do not go missing from school during the school day and what to do if this happens	<b>Supervision – teachers If child goes missing, call police, then parents.</b>

Every half a day of absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the head teacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by a person designated to do so by the headteacher. [see The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI No. 2006/1751) – Reg 7(1)].

School has procedures in place to resolve unexplained absences within two weeks.

Attendance registers are kept electronically.

School complies with and uses the DFE compulsory national attendance codes.

## Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## **Working in partnership with parents**

### **Absence:**

If a child is absent from school parents should contact the school on the first day of absence and maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

### **Illness:**

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parents' note explaining that their child was ill can be accepted without question or concern. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

However, schools can challenge parents' statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a child's attendance.

In fact it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness

### **The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:**

- Attendance is less than 90%.
- There are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness.
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated.
- Where there is a particular medical problems and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support.

### **Requests for leave of absence (exceptional circumstances)**

*The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013* have amended Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

### **Procedure for requesting a planned absence**

- All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request form (available from the school office) and submit this to the school at least six weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.

- DFE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional. An example that can be given is that during 2012 London Olympics all police leave was cancelled. As a result for that specific timeframe it was agreed that requests for leave for the children of Police officers affected by the cancellation of their leave would be treated as exceptional.
- If a parent/carer considers they require their child to have a leave of absences for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office. There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance and may be required to meet with the Head teacher.
- Where the head teacher is satisfied that there **are** exceptional circumstances to warrant the request of the leave of absence but has additional concerns such as the timing of the absence, the pupils attendance record, they may use the absence leave calculator.
- If the Head teacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a reply confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer.
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised, a reply informing the parents of this decision for each child and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent.
- If once notified in writing of the decision to unauthorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register. If the trigger of 10 unauthorised absences (sessions) is met then the absences should be referred immediately to the Education Enforcement Team at the Local Authority for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

#### **Other reasons for absences:**

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time, notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons.

The school will follow DFE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

Examples of authorised absence may include, days of religious observance, illness, and medical appointments.

Parents are advised to make appointments for dentist/doctor or optician outside of school hours where possible.

#### **Parents can support regular school attendance by:**

- Making sure their child leaves for school with plenty of time to arrive on time.
- Supporting and encouraging their child by attending parents evenings and other events.
- Contacting the school to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance.
- Working partnership with the school to resolve any issues that are impacting on their child's attendance.

## **Lateness**

Children must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session.

Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U as per DFE compulsory attendance codes).

School registration will close at 09:00am.

## **Poor attendance**

Those children whose attendance falls below national average will be closely monitored and further action considered. School will challenge the attitude of those pupils and parents who give a low priority to attendance

All registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis.

Schools will analyse individual pupil data to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern and parents will be informed by the school where their child's attendance causes concern.

School has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding school attendance.

After school has attempted to address attendance issues with parents, and if there is no improvement the case will be escalated to the Governing Body and ultimately Worcestershire County Council (through the Education Investigation Service at Babcock Prime).

School has in place a system for enabling returning pupils to catch up on learning and re-integrate within the school.

## **Persistent Absences**

Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be identified (pupils with more than 10% absence rate) and an action plan will be put in place to address the underlying reasons for the absence level. If actions do not lead to improved attendance, a meeting will be arranged with the school leadership and this may result in escalation to the Governing Body and ultimately Worcestershire County Council.

## **Good and excellent attendance**

The school will reward good attendance and improved regularly through reward schemes and incentives.

## **ATTENDANCE PANELS**

Parents of pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern may be invited to attend an attendance panel. An attendance panel is a formal meeting to discuss the child's school attendance, identify barriers to regular school attendance and agree a target and action plan to improve school attendance.



An attendance panel is chaired by a school governor or senior member of school staff. School representatives will be present this may include anyone in school who is involved with your child for an example a learning mentor.

## **Data Analysis**

Attendance data is submitted to the DFE, most schools use the management information systems via the school census. This data is published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics. Analysis of data helps to identify the main causes of absence within the school and plan appropriate action to ensure all pupils attend school regularly.

- Attendance data is analysed to identify particular groups of children whose absences cause concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils.
- Attendance data is analysed attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender to help identify areas of concern and attendance patterns.

## Appendix 1

### Blackwell First School Roles and Responsibilities for School Attendance

Name	Role	Responsibilities
<b>Dean Brady</b>	Schools Governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure compliance with relevant legislation (eg pupil registration, attendance registers)</li> <li>• Setting Attendance targets</li> <li>• Reviewing school attendance</li> <li>• Agreeing and Reviewing School Policy</li> <li>• Chairing attendance panels</li> </ul>
<b>Anna Moss</b>	Head Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with relevant legislation</li> <li>• Putting into practice school policy</li> <li>• Authorising/unauthorising absences</li> <li>• Leave of absence request</li> <li>• Line management</li> <li>• Contact with parents : overview of clear and escalating interventions</li> <li>• Responsibility for links with Education Enforcement Team</li> <li>• Attendance at attendance panels</li> </ul>
<b>Anna Moss</b>	Senior member of school staff /Attendance lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with relevant legislation</li> <li>• Putting into practice school policy</li> <li>• Line management</li> <li>• Contact with parents</li> <li>• overview of clear and escalating interventions</li> <li>• recording and evaluation of interventions</li> <li>• Data analysis</li> <li>• Responsibility for links with Education Enforcement Team</li> <li>• Data analysis.</li> <li>• Promoting school attendance</li> <li>• Management of reward scheme</li> <li>• Pupil Profiles</li> <li>• Planning attendance panels</li> </ul>
<b>Mandy Hargreaves</b>	Support Staff :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First day calling</li> <li>• Late arrivals</li> <li>• Attendance targeting</li> <li>• Day to day responsibility for escalating approach</li> </ul>
<b>All teachers</b>	Class teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marking registers</li> <li>• Promoting importance of regular schools attendance</li> <li>• Providing early warning of attendance concerns</li> <li>• Positive role modelling</li> <li>• Following policy and procedures</li> </ul>
<b>Mandy Hargreaves</b>	School Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining registers</li> <li>• First day calling</li> <li>• Late arrivals</li> <li>• Attendance targeting               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process for clearing registers</li> <li>• Day to day responsibility for escalating approach</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

### Children missing from education pathway

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff in education provision should follow the provision's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential, pupils need to attend regularly. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing in their area.

All education providers should:-

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Ensure parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- Ensure all pupils are punctual to school and lessons
- Ensure they liaise with the named social worker where Children's Social Work are engaged with the child or family

#### School Requirements

The **law** requires schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. Schools should use the national absence and attendance codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collection statistics through the School Census System. The codes are detailed in School Attendance (DfE, October 2014 - [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/361008/Advice\\_on\\_school\\_attendance\\_sept\\_2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/361008/Advice_on_school_attendance_sept_2014.pdf)). Please note the requirements around the use of the L and U code (page 8), and requirements for recording attendance of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils (page 11).

Schools should promote good school attendance and put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.

It is essential that staff are alert to signs to look out for, and the individual triggers to be aware of, when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM, CSE, forced marriage.

#### Involving other agencies and signposting:

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent, without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

**Pupils at risk of harm/neglect** - Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow child protection procedures. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police should also be involved.

### **Families of members of the Armed Forces**

Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MOD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

### **Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Families**

Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. Pupils are particularly vulnerable at transition from primary to secondary where a GRT pupil leaves school without identifying a new destination school. Schools should inform the CME team as soon as they become aware that a secondary school application will not be made for a GRT pupil. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Schools should work with families to minimise disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example if the family need to travel in order to work, they should be supported to dual register with other schools.

### **Persistent Absence**

The definition of persistently absent (PA) pupil as set by the DFE for 2015 - 2016 is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). The table below, derived from the census guidance, gives an indication of the minimum number of sessions a pupil would miss by each half term to be classed as PA.

<b>Half-term</b>	<b>10%</b>
Half-term 1	7 or more sessions
Half-term 1-2 (autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half-term 1-3	20 or more sessions
Half-term 1-4 (autumn term and spring term combined)	25 or more sessions
Half-term 1-5	31 or more sessions
Half-term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

### **Deletion of pupil from the admission register**

Schools must notify the local authority when they remove a pupil from roll in line with the Removing Pupils from Roll: Guidance for Schools.

All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, eg: elective home education (EHE). Schools must not seek to persuade parents to

educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record

- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to school at the end of that period
- have been permanently excluded

