



Brede Primary School

Policy name	Attendance Policy
Policy status	Statutory
Date approved by governing body	December 2019
Review date	December 2021

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Brede Primary School

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Brede School by

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend. Attendance figures are given in the pupils' annual reports and overall attendance is commented upon. Mid year parent consultations will involve discussions about attendance if this has impacted on the child's progress. Regular Pupil progress review meetings held with the classteacher and senior management will consider the child's attendance and the headteacher may ask to meet with parents to discuss the school's concerns. The school community is committed to working with parents to ensure the best outcome for every child. The Governing Body expect the Senior Leadership team to tackle absence and persistent lateness.

Principles

The Governing Body together with the Headteacher have a duty to limit absence and promote attendance in line with guidance from the DFE:

“children must attend every time the school requires. The only exceptions are the ones set out in the legislation: sickness, unavoidable causes, religious holidays, authorised absences, local authorities failure to make statutory travel arrangements, or where the child has no fixed abode, the parent's need to travel for business (subject to certain conditions)”

There are clear links between attendance, attainment and pupil well-being. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school every day.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out 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. The school will work with parents to support any family experiencing difficulties.

Every missed half-day session has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always requested.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

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 (except in extenuating circumstances)
- ❖ holidays taken during term time
- ❖ truancy before or during the school day
- ❖ absences which have never been properly explained
- ❖ children who arrive at school too late to get a mark eg registers have closed.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Support Service at the Local Education Authority. This agency will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

School Procedures

The school applies the following in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Sickness

- Parents should phone or email the office on the first day of absence before 9.00am.
- The school reserves the right to ask for medical evidence when attendance is considered a cause for concern and to code the absence as unauthorised until proof is provided. Parents may be requested to complete a consent for medical enquiry form which allows the school nurse to approach the GP directly.

Punctuality

- The school day officially begins at 8.50am. Any children arriving after the site has been secured will be directed via the school office. A late mark will be recorded in this instance. Any arrivals after registers close at 9.00am will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Attendance data is monitored by the school and where it is found to be a cause for concern may be referred on to the local authority (East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service - ESBAS).
- Persistent Lateness: the concern is that persistent lateness affects the

child's and others' learning, the headteacher will draw it to the parents' attention and further instances may be recoded as unauthorised which carries the risk of a referral to ESBAS and penalty notice being issued.

- Senior Leaders and ESBAS officers may conduct a "late sweep" at the school entrance to meet with parents and discuss reasons for late arrival.

Other term time absence

- Complete a withdrawal from learning form outlining the exceptional reasons why the child is being withdrawn from school.

Any unauthorised term time holidays that parents go ahead with, will automatically trigger a penalty notice from the local authority and a fine will be issued. Penalty notices are currently issued for £60 per child, per parent. Persistent lateness is also classified as unauthorised absence and incurs the same penalty.

Absence will only be authorised for very exceptional circumstances or for essential medical appointments which have to be made during school time. (Medical evidence may be asked for.)

Dealing with Persistent Absence

Every month, the school office will provide the headteacher with a summary of pupil attendance. Parents may be contacted where there is a likelihood of the attendance rate falling below 90% (persistent absence).

Should the absence fall further or continue with no sign of improvement, parents will be contacted and invited to meet with the headteacher or referred to the local authority (ESBAS). Parents may be liable for court prosecution and a penalty notice under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted various measures which encourage classes to compete on a weekly basis to retain a trophy. Mid year and end of year certificates are given to those children whose attendance is exemplary. Red, and Green attendance letters will be issued following the mid-year reviews.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Secretary
Headteacher
Deputy/Senco