

# **Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery**



## **Attendance Policy**

**September 2024**

Champions for Attendance:

Headteacher: Mrs C Parker and Designated Safeguarding Leader

Attendance Officer: Mrs N Butler and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leader

Governor: Mrs J Fendall

LA Education Welfare Officer: Ms M Carroll

In line with the Equalities Act (2010) we aim to ensure that any child, irrespective of protected characteristics (These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) is treated fairly and with respect. The law states that the public sector equality duty includes a general duty to, "Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not." This policy can be adapted to suit individual needs.

### **Rationale**

Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery believes regular attendance is vital for all our children if they are to gain the most from their education. There are clear documented links between regular attendance and positive attainment. Punctuality is also very important to ensure each child get the most out of school. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late for school. All young people have a right to an education. A child is of statutory school age between 5 and 16. Parents / Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. If a child does not, Parents / Carers may be breaking the law.

***At Broadbent Fold Primary School and Nursery, we aim for every child to have attendance of 100% and expect 98% or above. We recognise excellent attendance with yearly attendance certificates and rewards.***

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

The **Headteacher** in collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and our attendance officer, take responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures. They are the key people who motivate and lead the staff by demonstrating a commitment to promoting good attendance by:

- Leading public celebrations of good attendance by awarding certificates for whole class attendance, awarding certificates and badges for 100% attendance at the end of a school year. Improved attendance awards to motivate pupils and families.
- Providing attendance reports to the Governing Body of the school termly and annually.
- Being available for parents who may wish to discuss specific problems or in-school difficulties which their child is experiencing.
- Providing information to governors, parents, the LA attendance officer and the DfE regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the school's attendance policy and the associated in-school practices.

- Any attendance below 93% will result in a warning letter and meeting being put into place.
- Monitoring weekly attendance levels, half termly child percentages and contacting families whose children are at risk of falling below 90% attendance.
- Put into place Attendance Agreements with families when falling below 90%.
- Communicating with and reporting to the Local Authority on attendance matters and seeking relevant advice.

The **Governing Body** of the school is actively engaged in promoting good attendance at the school by supporting and encouraging children and teachers in their work. They achieve this by:

- Leading and taking part in public celebrations of good attendance.
- Supporting staff in the development of a whole school approach to promoting good attendance.
- Supporting staff in setting up appropriate attendance targets for the whole school.
- Working with the Headteacher to monitor and evaluate attendance trends in the school.
- Delegating authority (if necessary) to the Headteacher to decide whether or not an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Review data with the Headteacher on vulnerable groups / individuals.

Due to their regular daily contact with children, class teachers are ideally placed to assess whether the explanations received for a child's absence or lateness are reasonable, or if the child is at an early stage in developing a pattern of absence. At Broadbent Fold, we recognise that building good relationships with children and parents is vital in promoting good attendance.

**Class Teachers will:**

- Publicly praise and celebrate regular attendance and punctuality.
- Identify children who are beginning to develop, or have developed, a pattern of absence.
- Welcome children back after they have been absent due to illness.
- Where necessary, take specific steps to assist children and their families who are returning to school when they have been absent due to illness.
- Be a positive, active role model.
- Refer any concerns to the Headteacher or Attendance Officer.
- Organise online learning where required.

We believe all children should attend school regularly if we they are to reach their full potential. We encourage children to appreciate the importance of attending school regularly and on time, and to have a positive working attitude.

**A child should:**

- Aim for 100% attendance, only being absent through genuine reasons.
- If he/she arrives late, parents must report to the school office to say that they have arrived in school and the reason for lateness. Children will be marked as late.
- Not leave the school premises during the school day without permission and only when accompanied by an adult. Year 6 pupils can walk home alone, inline with our Walking Home policy.

**Morning Registration:**

Nursery	9am
Reception	8.45am
Key Stage 1 and Lower KS2:	8.45am
Upper Key Stage 2:	8.50am

On arrival to school the children go straight into their classrooms to start learning. Children should be ready, in their classrooms, with the appropriate equipment for registration. Children arriving after registration time without an authorised reason are marked as late (**L**). Registration closes 30 minutes after individual class start times. Any child arriving after this time, without a valid reason for their absence, will have their attendance marked as late after register closes (**U**). The school has an effective procedure to monitor children's absence. Class teachers regularly check the attendance of their class and will follow up a child's absence with appropriate personnel in school or with the child's parents.

**Parents** are expected to assist us in our work of raising and maintaining attendance levels throughout the school by:

- Ensuring the regular attendance of their child.
- Ensuring their child is punctual and arrives at school on time each day.
- Letting school know daily (as soon as possible) if their child will be absent from school and the reason for the absence e.g., illness. For frequent and longer-term absences, a request may be made by the school for parents to produce a medical note.
- Attending any meetings about their child's attendance, which may be necessary.
- Adhering to the statements in the 'Home-School' agreement.
- Access their child's attendance certificate on Arbor and monitor.

The issues of confidentiality and child protection underpin any issues regarding attendance. The school has a clear and explicit confidentiality policy that ensures good practice throughout the school which both children and parents should understand. It must be understood that teachers cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality regarding attendance issues.

## **The Role of our Attendance Officer**

Provides invaluable support for teaching staff in promoting attendance by:

- Recording information received from parents at the school office especially the reason for absence, identifying whether the absence is authorised or not and ensuring the correct code has been entered in the register.
- Liaising with class teachers regarding foreseen and unforeseen absence of children.
- Making routine phone calls to parents about their child's absences if no reasons are known. If school is unable to make contact, the police may be contacted to establish the whereabouts of the child in-line with our Child Protection Policy.
- Providing the Headteacher with attendance statistics and other reports upon request, through the use of Arbor.
- Preparing any attendance data required by the Headteacher.
- Spotting patterns and acting quickly.
- Linking with the LA Education Welfare Officer if a child's attendance needs further advice / support.
- Attendance Officer will make first contact with home upon a child's absence via telephone.

## **Strategies for Maintaining Good Attendance and Punctuality**

The school actively promotes good attendance and punctuality through involving children in the formation of this and other school policies and documents. These include the Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, School Values and the Home-School Agreement contract. Messages will be sent home to praise the pupil and families for attendance and improvements in attendance. Certificates rewarding 100% and good attendance (98%+) will be given in celebration assemblies on a termly basis. For particular achievements and improvements in attendance a certificate will be given to families / children's. End of the year 100% awards will be given in a special assembly. Whole class attendance will be celebrated weekly and information is clear on end of year reports.

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

### **Illness**

The school acknowledges that children may have unavoidable absences due to illness. It is important that children are not sent to school when they are unwell, especially in the event of a stomach upset when we request that children are kept off for at least 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.

### **Religious Observance**

Requests for absence for religious observance should be made in writing to the Headteacher. These will only be granted where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents belong.

### **Inclement Weather**

We understand that it may be difficult for children to attend school due to inclement weather, despite this, we will always endeavour to keep the school open. Please see our Adverse Weather policy.

### **Medical appointments**

Medical and dental appointments should, wherever possible, be avoided during the school day to minimise disruption to the learning of the child and that of other children. Medical absence will usually be authorised although proof of the appointment will be requested by the school. Online learning may be put into place. Schools to liaise with families where this is needed.

### **Term-time absences**

**If parents wish to apply for a term-time absence they must write to the Headteacher in advance, giving as much notice as possible.**

It is very unlikely that a holiday will be granted in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances (examples may include **but are not limited to**: parents work in HM Forces or other sectors where annual leave is limited; the family has suffered a bereavement or has a member of family with a terminal illness).

Following a request for a leave of absence during term-time, school will respond in writing, stating the reason for the decision made.

When an absence is authorised, if a child fails to return to school by the agreed return date, without good reason, subsequent days will be unauthorised and if no contact is made, the child's name may be removed from the school roll, with no guarantee of re-admission.

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will a child be granted leave of absence **exceeding 5 school days / 10 sessions** (1 day = 2 sessions). Such circumstances may include the following:

- Loss of passport
- Serious illness/accident to child or accompanying family member
- Death of a family member
- Missed or delayed flights
- War/civil unrest
- Severe weather conditions

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are categorised as unauthorised. Tameside LA considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs. It may well be one of the actions considered if a child does not return to school on the date specified in the request form. Fines will also be issued to families who take children out for holidays on a regular basis.

School will follow Keeping Children Safe in Education and do the following to improve attendance / find out where a child is.

- Our Attendance Officer will contact home on the first day of absence via telephone and/e-mail.
- Any subsequent absences with no contact our Attendance Officer will do a follow-up phone call / e-mail. Complete a home visit with the Headteacher.

- Send out warning letters if attendance starts to cause a concern – this is a gentle reminder.
- Arrange Attendance Panels with Headteacher and Attendance Officer to look at ways of supporting the family and improving attendance. To offer Early Help or external support.
- Contact Education Welfare for Guidance and Support if no improvement.

### Fixed Penalty Notices

Unauthorised absences of 5 days (10 sessions) or more within each school year (whether continuous or sporadic) may result in the LA issuing a fixed-term penalty.

Example fixed penalty	If paid within 28 days	If paid between 28-42 days	42+ days
1 parent, 1 child	£60.00	£120.00	<i>Liable for prosecution</i>
1 parent, 2 children	£120.00	£240.00	
2 parents, 1 child	£120.00	£240.00	
2 parents, 2 children	£240.00	£480.00	

Unauthorised absences include:

- Unauthorised term-time absences (e.g., holiday)
- No reason provided for absence
- Unsatisfactory reason for absence provided
- Arriving after registration has closed with no reason provided

### Closure of School at Short Notice:

In the event of inclement weather, the Headteacher (or SLT) will liaise with the Site Manager, assess the situation on site, check with the Met Office website and make a decision as to whether the school is to close. The decision will be communicated to staff, children and their families via e-mails and posted on the school website. Our aim is to make a decision as soon as possible and at least one hour prior to the scheduled school opening time. It may be unavoidable, that a decision is made during the day to close the school. This policy should be read in conjunction with Our 'Adverse Weather' Policy and these policies can be found on our school website.

### Every day and minute counts:

If you are late every day by 5 minutes, it adds up to over 3 days learning lost every year.

<b>Minutes Late</b>	<b>Days of Learning Lost</b>
5 Minutes	3.4 Days (98.4% Attendance)
10 Minutes	6.9 Days (97.6% Attendance)
15 Minutes	10.3 Days / 2 Weeks (94.7% Attendance)
20 Minutes	13.8 Days (92.9% Attendance)
30 Minutes	20.7 Days / 4 weeks (89.2% Attendance)

Be aware of how much learning time is lost with increasing numbers of days absent:

