



Birches First School

Believe, Grow, Succeed

Attendance Policy September 2020

This policy is written in accordance with the recommendations made by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (2002) and endorses Staffordshire's LA Attendance Policy.

Principles:

1. Regular and full school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Teaching and Learning become increasingly difficult when attendance is poor.
2. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
 - Parents have a legal duty under the Education Act of 1996 to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full time basis. All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.
3. Leave of absence will not be given to parents who wish to take their child out of school.
4. Unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents can be reported to the LA when there are persistent attendance problems.
5. Parents may be subject to fixed penalty fines where there are persistent attendance issues. Unauthorised absence due to families taking holidays in term time could contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued.
6. Every absence from school has to be classified **by the school**. It is the school that decides if an attendance is unauthorised.
7. Problems with attendance are best resolved by discussion between the school, parents and the pupil.
8. The Education Welfare Worker (Attend) is available to help the school, parents and pupils resolve problems with attendance.

Responsibilities – School (Teaching, TA and Admin staff):

1. To complete the school registers in accordance with statutory requirements.
2. To report a pupil's attendance to parents through the school reporting system and recognise and celebrate good attendance appropriately.
3. To classify a pupil's attendance as authorised or unauthorised as set out in the school guidelines.
4. To investigate and seek explanations for unexplained absence (First Day Contact) or lateness, including the collection of notes from parents and the recording of the reason for absence.
5. To inform the Headteacher and EWW (Attend) when patterns of lateness or attendance are giving cause for concern.
6. To assist in collecting data for the school's attendance tables.
7. To work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.

Responsibilities – Parents:

1. To make sure that their son/daughter attends school punctually, regularly and full time.
2. To inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason via telephone or in writing.
3. To try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day request and when not possible, in writing, permission for a pupil to miss school for a medical appointment.
4. To request permission in advance for any leave of absence by completing the appropriate form.
5. To assist the school in securing good attendance.
6. Ensure school has all up to date contact details.

School Procedures:

1. Registers will be completed morning and afternoon and returned to the school office.
2. Registration will be at 8.40am in the morning and registers will close at 8.50am. All registers should be returned to the school office by 9.00am. Afternoon registration will be completed electronically at 1.00pm by the class teachers. Registers will close at 1.05pm.
3. Any pupil not in school when the register is called will be marked with an N code (no reason yet provided) and the relevant code entered as soon as details of absence are known.
4. A First Day Contact Policy is used by the Administration staff if no contact has been made by 9.10am on the first morning of absence by a parent of an absent child.
5. Absences will be categorised in accordance with the guidelines set by the EWW (Attend).
6. If the school needs to be evacuated the administration staff will be responsible for collecting the registers and taking them to the relevant teachers.
7. All registers are periodically checked by the EWW (Attend).
8. Birches First will use the Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

Leave of Absence in Term Time:

1. **Authorised absence** – the Headteacher has the ultimate responsibility for authorising absences and will do so when a valid reason is given for the pupil's absence.
2. **Unauthorised absence** – an unauthorised absence will be given when a pupil does not attend school and a valid reason is not given for the absence, or when the Headteacher refuses to authorise a holiday request.
3. Leave of absence may be granted and authorised for medical appointments, bereavement and other reasons considered legitimate by the Headteacher.

4. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a family holiday during term-time unless there is an exceptional circumstance.
5. Any application for leave of absence must be made to the Headteacher in writing **before** the absence is taken. The Headteacher will then consider each application on its own merit.

Lateness:

1. Pupils are expected to arrive punctually for the start of the school day at 8.40am.
2. Registration is between 8.40am and 8.50am. Pupils arriving after 8.40am once the gate is locked must report with their parents to the school office.
3. Pupils arriving after 8.51am are marked with the L code. A comment is added in SIMS on the pupil's record indicating exact time of arrival. **After 9.01am** pupils will be marked with a U code (late after registers close) by administration staff and will gain an **unauthorised absence**.
4. Class teachers/Administration staff will discuss consistently late pupils with the Headteacher and EWW (Attend).

Monitoring:

1. Patterns of lateness and attendance will be monitored by the school teachers and admin staff.
2. Patterns of attendance will regularly be reviewed by the school with the help of the EWW (Attend), who will check these patterns during visits to the school.
3. Letters will be sent to parents explaining concerns over attendance/lateness.
4. If the problem still continues a second letter will be sent to parents to reiterating concerns and advising the parents that unless the situation improves the EWW(Attend). will be advised of the situation and may make a home visit.
5. If the problem continues a referral will be made to the EWW (Attend)..

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Various initiatives may be taken from time to time as required. If a pupil is not in regular attendance, he/she may be deprived of their rights to full time education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. Birches First School is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Evaluation:

This policy will be evaluated after a period of one year or when statutory requirements may change.

Signed Chair of Governors Date