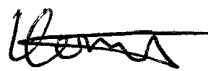
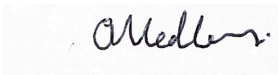


Attendance Policy

Beech Hyde Primary School and Nursery



Last Reviewed:	Spring 2024	
Review Date:	Spring 2025	
Policy Coordinator:	Karen Thomas	
Signed: Headteacher	Karen Thomas Headteacher	
Signed: Co-Chairs of Governors	Sarah Medlock	

Rationale

Beech Hyde School and Nursery alongside Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Aims

Beech Hyde Primary School and Nursery alongside Hertfordshire County Council expect Children's Services, Integrated Services for Learning to work closely together in partnership with parents in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils.

In order to do this, we:

- Create a culture on which good attendance is accepted as the norm
- demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- maintain and continue to develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school

Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy (if the school has an attendance policy) of their children's school
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their children's school if they are absent. This should be done on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the children return to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- should not book holidays during term time

Responsibilities - School

Beech Hyde Primary School and Nursery are responsible for supporting the attendance of our pupils and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

Schools are required to call attendance registers – Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases. Registers are taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. We will ensure that pupils can be accounted for in an emergency and that a pupil removed from the school at lunchtime will not go unnoticed.

Registers record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register will also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school. In marking registers, we use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education.

When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register will be made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

Beech Hyde School:

- works actively to maximise attendance rates – both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole
- Rewards good attendance by class, and individually to parents/carers
- has clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- has clear policies in place to address the attendance of vulnerable groups
- supports parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly responds to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- is sensitive to the needs of individual parents and is reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed.

Punctuality

Beech Hyde School takes steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness is monitored and followed up.

The School Day begins at 08.55am. When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open they will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)

When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site is noted in a book in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.

Responsibilities – LAAO

The ISL Attendance Teams fulfil the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

Beech Hyde School has a link Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) who works with the school and conducts a whole school attendance overview analysis which includes, among others: persistent absence; percentage of absence due to holidays and attendance of vulnerable groups.

The Use of Legal Action

If a pupil, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Local Authority Attendance Officer and the school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Senior Manager, Statutory Attendance and Participation Team on behalf of the Lead for Access and Inclusion. If 'exceptional mitigating circumstances' are not deemed to exist, and absences are unauthorised then cases may be considered for legal action at any point through throughout case work.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the LAAO may keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.

In cases where parents wilfully withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the ISL Attendance Teams will begin legal proceedings promptly on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

The Statutory Attendance and Participation Team may consider applying for an Education Supervision Order when a parent finds it difficult to exercise an effective influence over a child who has developed a pattern of poor attendance.

Before an application is made for an Education Supervision Order:

- other possible means of dealing with the pupil's poor attendance will be explored
- the attitudes of the parent and pupil towards the poor attendance, and their wishes as to how it should be dealt with, will be noted
- the Local Authority will be of the view that the Order will have a significant effect on the pupil's attendance at school

Authorising Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

Absence will be authorised if:

- the pupil is absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school')
- the pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following: the child's transport to and from school; boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school; enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision
- there is a close family bereavement
- leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application. (Parents should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence)
- leave of absence should be granted to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (c) for which a child performance licence has been issued

Before granting a licence the local authority must be satisfied that the child's education will not suffer. A school letter is requested as part of the licence application as confirmation of this. If a school believes a child's education will suffer as a result of taking part in a performance they should provide reasons to the local authority in writing. The information must be specific to the child (saying for example that it is against school policy is not sufficient). If the school does not provide such information the local authority will issue the licence. The absence should be recorded as code C

Further guidance is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Absence will be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

Pupils who are engaged in off-site educational activities should be recorded as attending (or absent from) an approved educational activity using the appropriate code.

The key features of approved educational activity are that they must be:

- educational *and*

- approved by the school *and*
- supervised by the school or someone authorised by the school

A pupil should be recorded as approved educational activity if he/she is attending:

- an approved work experience placement (Code W)
- a field trip or educational visit (Code V)
- an approved sporting activity approved by and supervised by someone authorised by the school (Code P)
- the pupil is attending an interview with a prospective employer, or another educational establishment (Code J)
- an off-site educational activity (Code B)
- Note: The B code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. By using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.
- Dual Registered – at another educational establishment (Code D)
- Note: This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. This code should be used where pupils are attending an ESC, hospital or special school on a temporary basis or for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children where they are known to be registered at another school for the session in question. Each school should only record the attendance/absence for those sessions where the pupil is expected to attend. Schools must ensure that they follow up all absence in a timely manner.

Part-time time-tables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs. A part time timetable must be time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. The school should mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

Guidance on part-time timetables is available at - <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-part-time-students>

Requests for Family Holidays During Term time

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which came into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Appendix 1 - General letter to Parents re: attendance, to be sent at the start of every academic year

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Attendance to school

It is very important that pupils aim to attend school every day, only absent when they are physically too unwell. National targets for attendance to school is 92%, and below this children are considered to be persistently absent from school. Along with our high expectations for all pupils, our school target for attendance is 95%.

Research shows that children who attend school regularly are happier learners than those who miss school on a regular basis. Children who miss school often fall behind with their studies and can become socially isolated.

We monitor attendance very carefully, and you will be contacted if your child's attendance falls below target. We want all our pupils to be happy in attending school and if you feel that your child is becoming reluctant to attend school then please do not hesitate to contact their Class teacher or the headteacher.

It is a parent/carer's legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and is not absent without good reason. If your child is too ill to attend school then please contact the school as soon as possible on the day.

If you know in advance that your child will be out of school, please let us know by calling the school office or by emailing admin@beechhyde.herts.sch.uk. Examples of such circumstances are medical appointments, funerals of a close relative, music exam. We would ask that, where possible, medical appointments are made outside of school hours.

Please note that we cannot grant permission for holidays/travel abroad (whatever the reason) in term time. This is due to government guidelines that do not permit the school to give authorisation for holidays/travel abroad during term time, even if this includes travel for a special occasion. If a child is absent from school, without authorisation, for more than 15 sessions (1/2 day = 1 session) in a term, then the school is obliged to apply to the local authority for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.

Many thanks for your support

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2 - 100% attendance congratulations letter

Dear Parent/Carer



Congratulations on 100% Attendance



I am very pleased to congratulate you and your child on achieving 100% attendance at school this year so far.

As I am sure you are aware, regular school attendance is a key factor in ensuring that pupils are able to achieve their full potential, maintain friendships and be happy in school.

With best wishes and thanks for your support

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Thomas'.

Ms K Thomas
Headteacher

Appendix 3 - Use of Attendance/ Punctuality Letters

The letter sequence outlined below is intended as a guide only. Professional judgement and discretion will be used when responding to individual circumstances.

Attendance dropping below 90%

Letter 1 to be sent by Headteacher
This letter makes parents aware of our concern

Attendance dropping below 85%

Letter 2 to be sent by Headteacher
This letter is a request for parents to attend an Attendance Review Meeting

Following the Attendance Review Meeting

Record of actions to be recorded on CPOMS
OR
Letter 3a - Record of non- attendance at Attendance Review Meeting

Attendance still dropping

Parents will be invited in and an Attendance Action Plan will be formulated

Following the Review Date:

The Headteacher will send either:
Letter to communicate that “unauthorised absence” status has ended
due to improvement Or
that “unauthorised absence” status will continue

Attendance still dropping

A Penalty Notice can be imposed if a student has 15 or more unauthorised sessions in the current or previous term. This process will be managed by the Headteacher.
Consider referrals to other supportive outside agencies.

Appendix 4 - Letter - Concern for attendance

Dear

Re: Attendance for the ?Term

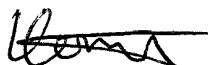
I am very concerned that your child's attendance has fallen to ?% for the ? Term. This is below the national target of 92%, and school target of 95%.

As I am sure you are aware, regular school attendance is a key factor in ensuring that pupils are able to achieve their full potential, maintain friendships and be happy in school. You should also be aware that regular attendance is a legal requirement.

We know you will be keen to ensure that your child's attendance improves as this is in their best interests. We will continue to monitor your child's attendance closely and look forward to seeing them in school every day from now on.

If there is any reason why you think your child is struggling to attend school, please do not hesitate to make an appointment to meet with me so that we can discuss strategies to improve the situation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Thomas', with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Ms K Thomas
Headteacher

Appendix 5 - Invitation to meeting with Headteacher

Dear

Re:

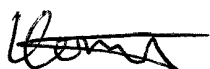
Your child's attendance has fallen to _____ %. This is well below the expected level and is a significant concern. This is well below the national target of 92%, and school target of 95%.

As I am sure you are aware, regular school attendance is a key factor in ensuring that pupils are able to achieve their full potential, maintain friendships and be happy in school. We are keen to work with you to ensure your child's attendance improves and therefore, I would like to invite you to a meeting with me at school on _____ at _____. If you can not attend at this time, please contact Mrs Pleasants in the school office to re-arrange. At this time we can discuss barriers to your child attending regularly and discuss strategies to improve the situation.

You will also be aware that regular attendance is a legal requirement. If a child is absent from school, without authorisation, for more than 15 sessions (1/2 day = 1 session) in a term, then the school is obliged to apply to the local authority for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice fine.

I look forward to meeting with you

Yours sincerely



Ms K Thomas
Headteacher

Appendix 6 - Letter to Parents where there is non attendance at an Attendance Review Meeting

Dear _____

Re <Child's name and DOB>

I am sorry that you were unable to attend the Attendance Review Meeting on (date) to discuss **<Child's name>** poor attendance to school.

We continue to be concerned about the level of absence during this academic year. As stated in previous letters, we are sympathetic to and support absence from school where there is a genuine need for this to occur. However, we are equally committed to ensuring the best levels of attendance from all pupils.

Please be aware that if your child's attendance does not improve, this may result in the school making an application to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued to you.

If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term, including holidays where parents/carers understand that permission had not/would not be given, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. This can be for each parent/carer for each child. A fine of £60 is issued if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Parents can discharge potential liability for conviction by paying the penalty. Failure to pay the fine may result in prosecution for the offence which could result in a fine of up to £1000 for each parent, per child. Should the fine not be paid in full within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecution for the offence.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, I encourage you to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 7 - Response to Leave of Absence Request where it is not granted

Dear _____

Re: _____ Leave of Absence Request

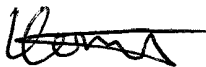
Thank you for informing us of your decision to take your child out of school for ___ days from _____ until _____ (inclusive).

Beech Hyde Primary School and Nursery is focused on ensuring our pupils get the best start to education and by doing so works very hard to improve attendance for all our pupils. Our school works in partnership with parents to provide the best education for each child and believes that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

It is not advisable to take your child on a leave of absence during term time as this causes disruption to their education. Schools must follow the law in this regard and may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances if certain criteria are fulfilled.

In this particular case and your individual circumstances, the exceptional criteria have not been met and I therefore, cannot authorise the absence.

Yours sincerely,



Ms K Thomas
Headteacher

Appendix 8

Checklist for re-integration strategies for Pupils with 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance'

Emotionally based School Avoidance is where a pupil wants to attend school but their anxiety/medical condition is preventing them. This could be due to an SEND need (e.g. ASD), or a mental health need (e.g. anxiety). This list is not mandatory (i.e. all steps do not have to be taken), nor exhaustive.

Where there is ongoing absence for which the parent states there is a medical reason, medical evidence must be obtained from a doctor. The evidence must state that the child is unfit to attend school. ESMA can be referred to (after 3 weeks) if the parent has a consultants letter. This will usually be twice a week on site (they will not come to home). B can be entered at the time the child has ESMA only, otherwise it must be .I'.

Strategy	Notes	Implemented
Meeting with parent/ pupil to discuss issues/ barriers to attendance, within 2/ 3 weeks of attendance stopping. Come up with a plan for reintegration and other reasonable adjustments. Consider all areas - PPG, SEND, EAL etc		
Pupil puts uniform on at home once a day (approx. 1 week)		
Parent and Pupil drive to school once a day (approx. 1 week)		
Pupil comes in for a short period each day - in or out of classroom		
Pupil sees friends at break or lunch only - own room or general		
Pupil comes in to do 1 lesson (of their choice) per day. This builds up over time to 2 or 3 lessons a day until it is full time again		
SEND needs not already identified? My Support Plan		
Signposting to other services - GP, CAMHS, Step2, ESMA		
Identify which lessons are causing concern. Can adaptations be made? Look at seating plan, teacher adaptations, friends, group.		
Support in school - Mentor, buddy, TA, clubs, safe place for break, lunch		
Soft start to the day (late, meet and greet)		
Exit Card		
Reduced timetable agreed (part time attendance). This must be time agreed and paperwork signed by parent, to notify HCC completed and sent. If agreed 'C' can be entered for when not on site		
Reduced timetable agreed (full time attendance - time in other agreed spaces)		
Reduced home learning (time frame agreed)		
Looking at friendships - Restorative practice with friendship group		