Beddington Infants' School

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

> Working with the Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence

> The Education Welfare Officer is responsible for advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Kelly Reid, the Assistant Head Teacher (Inclusion). Both the Assistant Head Teacher (Inclusion) and Education Welfare Officer can be contacted on 020 8647 7813.

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. The school register is a legal document.

3.5 School office staff

School office staff will:

> Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.

> Share any parent/carer queries about attendance with the attendance lead in order to provide families with more detailed support on attendance.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time.

> Contact the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, informing the school when their child is expected to return. Families can leave a voicemail message if calling when the school is closed.

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present.

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity and the nature of the activity.

> Absent and whether this absence is authorised or not.

> Absent due to exceptional circumstances and the nature of circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between 8.45am-8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school office staff in person, by telephone, voicemail message or email.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school office in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Lateness disrupts a child's learning **AND** the learning of others in the class. **10 minutes late each day is 50 minutes late each week, which is more than 6 days a year.**

Children should be in school for the register at 8.55 am and 1.15 pm.

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

> After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Children arriving after the gate has closed enter the school through the main office entrance. The parent/carer must sign their child in using the Inventory electronic system in the office, stating the time arrived and giving a reason for the late attendance. The children will then be taken to their classes. The number of 'minutes late' is recorded for each child in their SIMS record on each occasion they are late.

Please talk to a member of staff if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Parents / carers of children who are persistently late are:

• Monitored by the school and spoken to informally to explain the importance of punctuality.

If punctuality does not improve:

• A letter of concern is sent to the parents/carers with information about the child's level of lateness and missed learning.

If there is still no improvement:

• Parents/carers are invited into school to meet with the Education Welfare Officer.

Leaving school at the end of the day

All children are collected from the classrooms. Adults who know they are going to arrive late should contact the school in advance.

The school is required to notify the Local Authority if children are not collected within 30 minutes of the end of the school day.

If no contact has been established with parents/carers then Sutton Children's First Contact Service will be contacted and they will take the child to a place of safety, if necessary. It is essential that parents/carers ensure that the contact details we hold are up to date.

Permission to collect

Families provide the school with a list of people who are allowed to collect each child. This list is held in the classroom so that staff can check it easily. The school makes every effort to ensure that children only go home with parents/carers or known approved adults. Families must inform the school when their child is being collected by someone new, and in situations where the school has not been made aware, we will telephone the parents/carers for permission for the child to be collected by this adult.

Children should be collected by a responsible person who is at least 16 years old.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact Sutton Children's First Contact Service for advice and/or conduct a welfare check by visiting the pupil's home in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not.

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off school to go on holiday. Taking holidays in term time affects children's schooling as much as any other absence and the school expects parents to help by not taking their children away in school time.

Any holiday taken in term time will be recorded as unauthorised. This could result in parents being issued with a Penalty Notice and/or your child being removed from the school roll. Please see section 5.2 for more detail on Penalty Notices.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each term we award certificates for 100% attendance and certificates for those who attended nearly every day of that term. At the end of the year, further special certificates and a small gift is awarded to those who have achieved 100% attendance for the whole year.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

> Write a letter of concern to parents/carers notifying them that their child's attendance is being monitored.

> Meet with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

> Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

> Request that legal action is taken by the Education Welfare Office on behalf of the school against parents/carers for failing to ensure the regular attendance of their child/children at school.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion). At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing board.