



Beaufort Primary School

Attendance and Children Missing in Education Policy

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Introduction

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the skills needed to equip them for life.

Missing school for any reason can deprive a child of educational opportunities and hamper their progress at school. Children have a right to an education and, by denying children their rights, can have a long-lasting effect on ensuring children meet their true potential. There is a strong correlation between good school attendance and academic achievement.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership.

There are 190 statutory school days a year, so there are 175 other days available for holidays that would not have a negative effect on a child's education. By taking a child on holiday in term time, they may be getting an unspoken message that school is not important.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments to the regulations which came into force on 1 September 2013 make it clear that parents/carers **do not** have a legal right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time.

Leave of absence may be granted in special or exceptional circumstances only at the Headteacher's discretion.

Children should come to school every day. They should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable". Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason; illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences (as detailed in the Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations Version 1 September 2006).

Arrival, Registration and Lateness

All children should be in the playground ready to come into school at 8.55 am each day, 9.00am for EYFS, although children are entitled to enter the playground from 8.45am to make a calm start to the day. A register is taken twice a day; a day counts as 2 attendances.

Morning registration ends at 9.05 am. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be marked in as Late. After 9.30 am this will become an Unauthorised Absence. The afternoon register is taken at 1.00 pm.

It is essential that children leaving school with a parent/carer outside the normal hours are signed out from the office. Signing out slips in the office are used in the case of fire as an appendix to class fire registers.



Registers are checked regularly by the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences.

Illness and medical appointments

If a child is unfit for school, parents/carers must contact the school on the first day, in person, by letter, by telephone. This will reassure us that the child has not 'gone missing' on the way to school, especially if the child has been seen by others. If you do not contact school you will be called or sent a text by Parentmail.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

The school may refer the child to the education welfare officer (EWO) from the local education authority. Schools are required to inform the EWO of children who are not attending regularly.

Parents/carers may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask their advice. They are independent of the school. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the local education authority.

Holiday Absence

Holidays in term time are not an entitlement and are strongly discouraged by the Government, Local Authority and school.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations that came into force on 1 September 2013 state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Leave of absence requests for the following reasons are **not** considered to be **special or exceptional**:

- availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- poor weather experienced in holiday periods
- overlapping with beginning or end of term.

Parents/carers who decide to take a holiday without permission, will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer, and could result in a fixed penalty notice being issued and/or court action.

Parents/carers needing leave of absence for exceptional circumstances should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.



Arrangements for absence in other circumstances e.g. family bereavement and exceptional circumstances:

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur occasionally, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

Children Missing from Education

Where a child is no longer attending school and the reasons are not known they are regarded as “missing from education”. The responsibility to locate children who go missing in education in Derby rests with the Education Welfare Service as per Derby Safeguarding Children Board’s Runaway and Missing Children Strategy.

Summary

As a school we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 95%
- Maintain parents’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ringing/contacting us on the first morning of all absences with the reason
- Arranging dental and doctor’s appointments out of school hours
- Sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child’s return to school after an illness
- Keeping us updated by telephone if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

We shall:

- Follow up all unexplained absences from the first day
- Remind parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance
- Publish your child’s attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child’s attendance
- If we continue to have concerns make a referral to the School Education Welfare Officer, who visits the school regularly to review and support attendance matters.