

1. Introduction

Birklands Primary School recognises the importance of regular attendance at school. It is important that student attendance is closely monitored to ensure appropriate intervention to overcome barriers to school attendance. The school will endeavour to recognise high levels of students' attendance and to challenge and support students where attendance issues are identified.

2. Management of Attendance

The School uses the SIMS system to manage pupil attendance. Registration sessions occur every morning and afternoon, with registers closing 10 minutes after registration 08:50 and at 13.05. Children who arrive at school after this time are registered with a late mark.

Attendance is overseen by the Office Manager – Joanne Hughes who is responsible for tracking attendance issues and for initiating concern referrals to the Head of School, Nick Copestake. Teachers are responsible for monitoring day to day attendance and acting as the initial liaison point with home. The Office Manager and HoS meet on a weekly basis to review attendance issues.

3. Identifying & improving attendance in respect of Persistent Absence and Persistent Lateness

Where attendance is a concern pro-active action will follow, informing parents of the emerging issues and engaging in dialogue to ensure improvement. The school uses stages one to three trigger points to help prioritise cases, although each individual case will be managed according to circumstances.

Children being late into school

- Where a pupil is late and that lateness is 30 minutes after registration has closed the register should be marked with a U. The U code is used by the Local Authority, when calculating whether or not the absence is sufficient for Penalty Notice action.
- Up until the 30 minute point the register should be recorded as an L.
- Exceptions to being late are if a child lives 3 miles from school and no alternative transport is provided OR there are other exceptional circumstances.

Children exhibiting Persistent Absence from school

- Where a child is absent from school without reason the O code is entered on to the register.

(Stage One) Addressing Persistent Absence/Lateness

- **When a total of 6 sessions are missed has been reached**

The school will write to parents requesting an explanation for the absence and offer support in a monitoring letter (**letter 1**). When this monitoring letter is issued, the start date of monitoring period is specified on that letter. We make sure that the monitoring period starts after the letter is posted and in time for the parent to receive that letter.

Students will then be placed on a monitoring list for the next twelve weeks. If absence occurs then there is an immediate follow up phone-call. Attendance will be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Head of School.

- If the Attendance improves but the pupil has a further one, two or three sessions that are unauthorised then a **letter A** is sent, with the headline message saying 'Attendance below this figure will not be authorised unless medical proof is shown'.
- If Attendance improves and no further unauthorised sessions are recorded within the monitoring period then a **letter B** is sent. The headline message will say that school are pleased with the improvements in attendance and again will offer discussion time to help resolve any further attendance issues.

(Stage Two) Addressing Persistent Absence/Lateness

- **For having ten or more unauthorised sessions within a six week block during the twelve week monitoring period.**

Formal meeting in school and a 'stage 2' warning letter issued (**letter 2**). Birklands will liaise with Targeted Support directly to consider supportive measures and the possibility of a fixed penalty notice given. Parents/Carers at this stage are invited to an attendance panel meeting. See examples below regarding accrument of unauthorised absences.

E.g.1 If the unauthorised attendance before the letter was 3 days or 6 sessions; then once the monitoring period starts the Local Authority only need to have a total of 5 days or 10 sessions i.e. another 2 days or 4 sessions within a 6 week rolling block to issue a fine.

E.g.2 If pre-monitoring period 8 sessions were unauthorised, then the child only needs an additional one day or two sessions unauthorised within the 6 week rolling block to be issued with a fine for the parents by the Local Authority.

E.g.3 If pre-monitoring period and letter there were 12 unauthorised sessions; then the Local Authority still need at least one session of unauthorised absence to be in that specified monitoring period and a total of 10 sessions within the 6 week rolling block to issue a fine to parents.

We aim high, we care, we believe, we are respectful

(Stage Three) Addressing Persistent Absence/Lateness

- For having more than ten unauthorised sessions within a six week block during the twelve week monitoring period.

Birklands will continue to work with Targeted Support to initiate legal proceedings and fixed penalty notices. Appropriate multi-agency discussion, including referral to the Meden Family 'JAT.'

4. Term-Time Holidays

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude. Taking children out of the academic year for a holiday does not allow them to receive an efficient full-time education.

The government strongly urges schools not to approve such absence from school and indeed nowadays classifies absence for holidays as truancy. Schools are also discouraged by the Targeted Support (who are responsible for attendance at County level) from allowing pupils to leave school in term-time to take holidays. Attendance percentages, absenteeism and truancy are closely monitored by the County Targeted Support Service and, of course, OfSTED, and attendance statistics have to be returned to the DFE annually. The governors have also recently reviewed the attendance figures of the school and have agreed that in their view, holidays should not be taken in term-time but in the allocated school holiday time.

Therefore, as from September 2015 all holiday requests need to be submitted on a *Leave of Absence Request* form which can be collected from the main school office or on the school website. **Unless it is for exceptional circumstances holidays will not be authorised.** If parents choose to take their child out of education for a holiday without authorisation, if the level of absence is in excess of 3 days in total (six sessions) within a 6 week period, then school will be obliged to refer the incident to Targeted Support who will then consider issuing a Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure the regular attendance of their child. The Penalty Notice is set at £120 and should be paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 21 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60.

5. Rewarding good attendance

Our policy acknowledges the importance of good attendance. School recognise high levels of attendance in the following ways:

- **Weekly** via hall display plus five minutes extra play (to best attending class) in addition to mentions in celebration assembly, where they are awarded the school attendance mascot (Felicity the flamingo).
- **Termly** via an end of term enrichment activity afternoon (as chosen by 100% attendance children) and a positive acknowledgment letter to parents.
- **Annually** via a book token reward for 100% attendance and a positive acknowledgment letter to parents.

Equality Duty

This policy has been reviewed in the context of Equality Impact and assessed as: Neutral

This policy was last reviewed in: November 2016

Name of reviewers: Mrs H Duffy & Mr N Copestake

Policy agreed by:



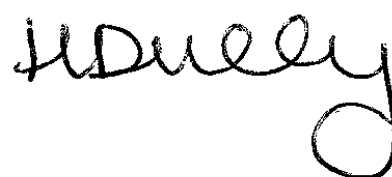
Nick Copestake

(Head of School)



T. Gibbon

(Chair of Governors)



H. Duffy

(Executive Head of School)