

Attendance Policy

Brooke Hill Academy Trust



Approved by:

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BROOKE HILL ACADEMY TRUST
Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

Brooke Hill Academy Trust promotes the view that regular, punctual attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our pupils and we take seriously our responsibility to monitor and promote this. We feel the whole school community has a responsibility for punctuality and we aim to meet these obligations through:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Leave of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the School (not by the Parent/Carers), as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, this may be done as a phone call to report absence but any requests in advance should preferably be in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness. Parents/Carers must inform the School of the symptoms their child has as 'unwell' or 'ill' is insufficient and it can't be authorised.

Unauthorised absence is when a child is away from school without permission of the Head of School. These are absences which the school does not consider to be reasonable, for which no explanation has been

given or has never been properly explained.

Holidays in term time: There is no lawful entitlement to take time off during term time to go on holiday. Amendments to the 2006 Education Act make it clear that from September 2013 the school may not grant any leave of absence other than in exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers must apply to the Head of School to request leave of absence who will judge each application on its own merit. Application forms should be obtained from the school office.

The Head of School may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. We define 'Exceptional circumstances' as '**unavoidable, necessary and short**'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head of School's discretion and the parent/carer may be required to provide further information upon request. Authorisation is not guaranteed. Factors that may be considered could include:

- The nature of the request and why it could not be reasonably taken during the 175 non school days of the year.
- Previous absence (both authorised and unauthorised) and requests for term-time leave.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods and end of Key Stage Two assessments.

The following will generally not be considered 'exceptional':

- Relatives coming to visit
- Family holidays in UK or abroad
- Family day trips
- Taking holiday to coincide with family members who have different term times or holidays.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence may include:**

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and referred to the Local Authority. This may result in sanctions such as a Penalty Notice (see below).

Children may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the School, Parents/Carers and the child. If the child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the School may refer the child to the Social Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO) from the Local Authority. The SIDO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the SIDO can use court proceedings to prosecute parents /carers and fixed penalty

notices can be applied.

Parents/carers may wish to contact the SIDO themselves to ask for help or information. The SIDO is independent of the School and will give impartial advice. The telephone number is available from contacting the Local Authority.

We must warn you that failure to ensure your child's regular attendance at school is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If the head of school has not authorised the absence, then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you. This may result in:

- **A Penalty Notice requiring payment of a penalty of up to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the penalty due will result in prosecution before Magistrates Court.**
- **Prosecution under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.**
- **Prosecution under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.**

Please note that you may not be issued with Penalty Notice as the Local Authority may decide that it is appropriate to prosecute you without first offering an alternative.

3. Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

a. Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.05am either by telephone or by sending an absence note into school stating the symptoms. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the School each time: telephone calls or notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdressers appointments, etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which take place during school time.

Parent/carers and pupils are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours wherever possible. Please be aware that absence due to sickness and / or diarrhea requires the child to be absent from school for 48hrs from the cessation of the illness.

b. Absence without notification

If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation for the absence by 9.15am the school will contact the Parent/career by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence.

c. Lateness

Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for that session unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parent/Carers are expected to ensure that pupils are present at registration. A late mark is awarded if arrival is after 9am but before 9.20am whilst the register is still open. If the pupil arrives after 9.20am when the register has already closed, an unauthorised mark is awarded. Children arriving late to school MUST be signed in by their parents/carers. They are not expected to arrive unattended.

d. Persistent absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level can do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we request the full support of parents and guardians to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly; any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/guardians will be informed of this immediately.

The school will contact home if any student has reached below the 90% attendance rate so that intervention strategies can be put in place before the student moves into the PA range.

4. Summary of attendance

99%+	Excellent - attendance at this level will ensure your child is enjoying and achieving along with their peers.
97-98%	Average - this level of attendance will now be impacting your child's learning. You should now be working with the school to improve this attendance.
Below 96%	Poor - The cumulative effect of this level of absence will now impact on your child's overall levels at SATs and up to GCSE
Below 92%	Unacceptable –Your child is now falling into “Persistent Absence”. This is of serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and may lead to your prosecution for failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. The school will start not to authorise all absence and you may have to provide medical evidence for absence due to illness.

Attendance during the school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is this many weeks absent in the year	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

5. Inclusion and Equality statement

The mission statement of our school reflects our ethos of valuing individuality and diversity. We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of gender, race, cultural background, ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or any physical or sensory disability. We learn that people are not all the same. We believe that inclusion and equality is about the school fitting around your child.

6. Additional Notes

- The schools will be required to look for split illnesses, where days of illness are being taken (this will include patterns of absence).
- Unauthorised holidays will be taken into account.
- If the absences are due to illness (5 days or more) this absence will only be authorised if medical evidence is provided. Please note that in these circumstances, all future absences will require medical evidence also.
- Where poor attendance is a concern, all medical appointments can only be authorised where proof

of appointment is given (e.g. medical appointment card / letter).

- The school can only authorise a maximum of half a day absence for medical appointments unless proof of appointment can be provided.