



# **Bevendean Primary School and Nursery**

## **Attendance and Absence Policy**

This policy was adopted in **January 2024**

This Policy is due for review in **January 2025**

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## Statement of intent

Bevendean Primary School & Nursey believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to support good attendance.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents understand their legal obligation to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

# Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.

The school's Attendance Officer is Mark Dally, Headteacher; he is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Parents are responsible for:

- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Ensuring that their children arrive to school on time.

## Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

**Authorised absences** – are absences which are for a good reason e.g. illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time), emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** - are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given e.g. parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, absence without reason, truancy, children arriving late (after the close of registration), celebrating birthdays and unauthorised holidays. Cases of unauthorised absence may be referred to the Local Authority for sanctions including a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution

**Persistent absence (PA)** - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

## Attendance Expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils. Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually, for the full day, every day.

### **Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2**

The school day starts at 8.45am, and pupils will come into their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, the gate will be opened at 8:40am so that children can be in class on time.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked at 8.50am and any pupil arriving after this time will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:15am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time

### **Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 & Year 6**

The school day starts at 8.50am, and pupils will come into their classroom, ready to begin lessons at this time; therefore, the gate will be opened at by 8:45am so that children can be in class on time.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked at 8.55am and any pupil arriving after this time will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The morning register will close at 9:20am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time

## **Absence Procedures**

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

The school's telephone number is: 01273 681292

The school's email address is: [admin@bevendean.brighton-hove.sch.uk](mailto:admin@bevendean.brighton-hove.sch.uk)

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness or if a child's absence is below 90% or for absences reported as illness of 3 days or more.

The Headteacher and someone from the Admin Team will meet regularly to discuss attendance across the school; the Education Welfare Officer will join these meetings fortnightly. At these meetings, pupils with

concerning levels of attendance will be discussed alongside any extenuating circumstance. Actions will be agreed at these meetings to improve attendance. There may include:

- A meeting between parent and Headteacher
- Phone contact between the EWO and parents
- Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)
- Phone call / email to praise improve attendance
- Reward charts for individual pupils

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to meet with the Headteacher.

## Attendance Register

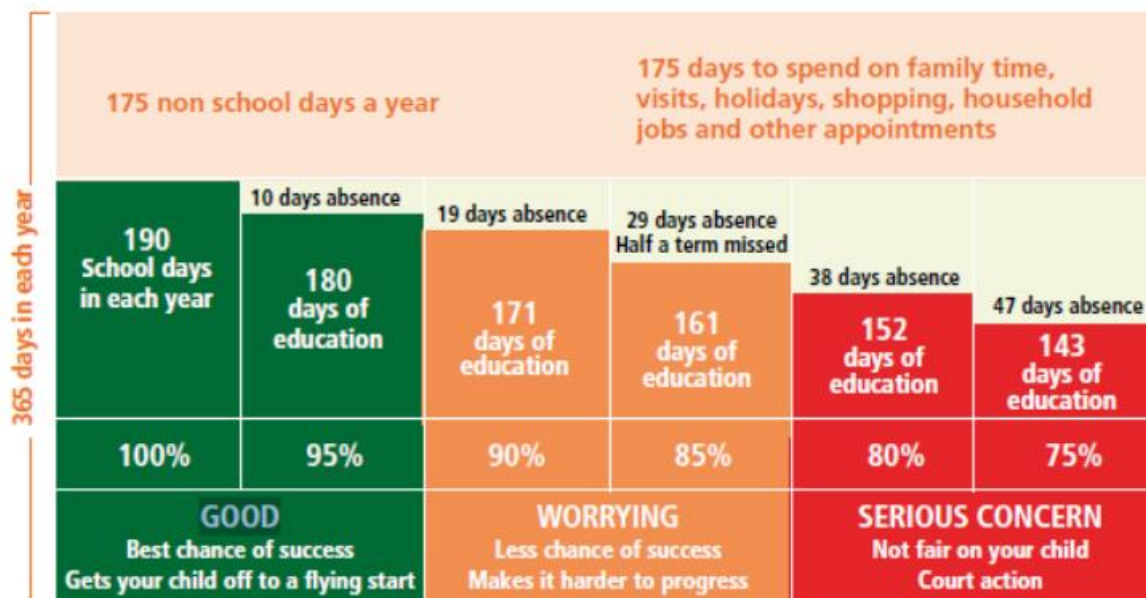
The school uses Scholarpack to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session to record whether pupils are present or absent.

ABSENCE CODES	DESCRIPTION
/	PRESENT (A.M.)
\	PRESENT (P.M.)
B	EDUCATED OFF SITE
C	OTHER AUTHORISED CIRCUMSTANCES
D	DUAL REGISTRATION (ie pupil attending other establishment)
E	EXCLUDED
F	EXTENDED FAMILY HOLIDAY (agreed)
G	FAMILY HOLIDAY (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
H	FAMILY HOLIDAY (agreed)
I	ILLNESS (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)
J	INTERVIEW
L	LATE
M	MEDICAL/DENTAL (NOT Illness)
N	NO REASON YET PROVIDED FOR ABSENCE
O	UNAUTHORISED CIRCUMSTANCE (not covered by another appropriate code)
P	APPROVED SPORTING ACTIVITY
R	RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE
S	STUDY LEAVE
T	TRAVELLER ABSENCE
U	LATE (after registers closed)
V	EDUCATIONAL VISIT OR TRIP
W	WORK EXPERIENCE
#	SCHOOL CLOSED TO PUPILS e.g. School holidays
Y	ENFORCED CLOSURE

## Persistent Absence

Persistent Absenteeism A pupil is defined as a 'Persistent Absentee' if they miss 10% or more of all possible school sessions, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.



If your child has attendance that has fallen below 90% over a six-week period, the school will:

- raise awareness of the attendance concern with parents/carers,
- seek medical evidence to explain low attendance,
- consistently review attendance
- invite parents to attend an Attendance Support Meeting to discuss concerns,
- send standard letters at every stage in the process to inform them of the school's concerns and any potential consequences of a failure to improve attendance.

The school will always work with families in a supportive way to help improve attendance, making reasonable adjustments if appropriate. Families are always encouraged to speak to the school with any concerns regarding attendance or if support is needed.

If there is little or no improvement in attendance, despite the intervention and support detailed above, the school may refer the case to the Council's Access to Education Team to request that a fixed penalty notice be issued. A family may receive up to three fixed penalty notices in a 12 month period. If a family has received the maximum of three fixed penalty notices in a twelve month period, and there has been little or no improve in attendance, the school will refer the case to the Council's Access to Education Team to consider prosecution.

## Sickness

Children do get ill which does mean they may need to have time off school. We are aware however that sometimes children are missing school when they could be in the building. The traffic light guidance and / or link below may help you decide if your child is well enough to come into school. If your child is having a regular, reoccurring medical issue please let us know. We could get the school nurse involved and hopefully address your child's medical needs and improve their attendance.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

<b>RED – STAY AT HOME</b>  <b>Sickness &amp; Diarrhoea</b>  48 hours must have elapsed before a child can return to school from the last episode.	<b>AMBER – SEEK ADVICE</b>  <b>Headache, Feeling Sick, Tummy Ache</b>  Children often feel unwell if they are anxious, if in doubt contact the school for advice.	<b>GREEN – COME TO SCHOOL</b>  <b>Mild cough, Cold, Sore Throat, Feeling Tired</b>  We will always contact you if your child is ill during the school day
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### Medical Appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment and to provide confirmation of the appointment if possible (letter, text message or email).

## Authorising Parental Absence Requests

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account.

### Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to contact the Headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is very unlikely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- Where a pupil's attendance is below 90% for any reason
- Where the requested absence would take the child's attendance below 90%

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a fixed penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

## SEND and Health-Related Absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance.

The school will do whatever it can to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding regular meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan
- Identifying pupils' needs
- Accessing specialist support if appropriate
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

## **Rewards and Positive Reinforcement**

The school recognises that encouragement, praise and rewards can go a long way in improving pupil attendance and consequently the school does the following to support parents / carers and pupils with attendance:

- Celebration and certificates in weekly Headteacher's Assembly
- Attendance prizes given out in weekly Key Stage assembly
- Golden Table for termly class best attendance
- Diamond Table for annual class best attendance
- Letters going out to praise parents / carers and children if their attendance is 95% - 98%
- Celebratory letters going out to praise parents / carers and children if their attendance is 98% - 100%
- Rewards and praise from SLT if children's attendance improves or PA pupils have whole week(s) of full attendance
- In class reward charts for targeted pupils

Attendance is a whole school priority and therefore driven forward by the whole school community.