

School Attendance Policy



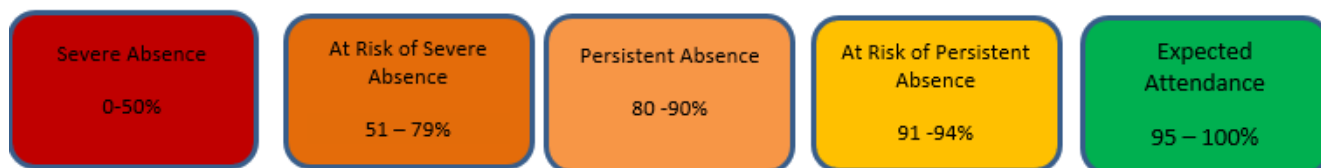
Approved by:	Jonathan Mason	Date: January 2024
Last reviewed on:	January 2025	
Next review due by:	January 2026	

Contents

Mission Statement	2
Aims.....	3
Expectations	3
Implementation	3
Head Teacher	3
Class Teacher.....	4
Pupil Support Officer	4
Administrator	4
Governors	4
Parents/Carers	4
Liaising with External Agencies	5
Encouraging attendance through good practice and rewards.....	5
Responding to non-attendance and persistence absence	6
Lateness	6
Responding to persistent late arrivals	6
Authorised or Unauthorised Absence	7
Family Holidays/Leave of Absence	7
Data Protection Act	7
Resolving Disagreements	8

Mission Statement

Belton Lane Community Primary School is committed to providing a full and dynamic education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. To this end we at Belton Lane will do as much as we can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may impede full attendance are acted on as quickly as possible. The school aims to work together with parents and carers to ensure that all children attend both regularly and punctually. The schools' expectations regarding attendance are in line with Lincolnshire County Council guidelines and set out clearly in our Home/School agreement.



Aims

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access education in Belton Lane Community Primary School in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their academic and personal development needs.
- It is the responsibility of the parents or carers to ensure their children's attendance at school as required by law.
- We aim to motivate pupils by recognising and rewarding good and/or improved attendance levels.

Expectations

We expect the following from our **pupils**:

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they arrive on time and prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about a problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from **parents**:

- To ensure their children attend school every day.
- To ensure your child arrives to school punctually and is properly equipped
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical on each day their child is unable to attend school to tell us why their child is absent.
- To avoid booking family holidays in term-time.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from **school**:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason and the prompt implementation of the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Recognition and rewards for good and improved attendance.

Implementation

By law we are required to keep accurate records of attendance. For this reason staff at Belton Lane will:

- Ask for explanations from parents and carers for every single absence
- Contact you about any unexplained absence
- Let you know if your child's absence or lateness is of concerns and work with you to find a way of improving it.

In order for attendance to be successful, parents and school staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to our pupils the importance and value of education and regular, punctual attendance at school. In addition, specific responsibilities are highlighted for staff, Governors and parents as follows:

Head Teacher

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, staff, pupils and parents.

- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To convene School Attendance Panel meetings as required in accordance with this policy.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff responsible for attendance procedures.

Class Teacher

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform appropriate staff of concerns in a timely manner.

Pupil Support Officer

The Pupil Support Officer is a member of staff in school to whom we defer a number of roles which include:

- To oversee the work of administrative staff responsible for attendance procedures.
- To work closely with parents, pupils and outside agencies as needed to support good and improved attendance.
- To provide the Head Teacher with regular analysis and action regarding pupil attendance.
- To convene School Attendance Panel meetings as required in accordance with this policy.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of attendance strategies and report findings to the Head Teacher and Governing body on a regular basis.
- To evaluate data and strategies on a termly basis.

Administrator

- To implement first day and possible subsequent contact with parents regarding pupil absence depending on circumstances
- To ensure absence reasons are placed in registers to inform class teacher of details of absences.
- To communicate more detailed feedback from parental contact to class teacher, Pupil Support Officer and/or Head Teacher as relevant.
- To maintain the registration management system and logs of pupils arriving late and reasons given

Governors

- Governor(s) may be requested to provide representation at School Attendance Panel Meetings
- To receive attendance progress reports regularly at Governors' Meetings thereby maintaining an up to date awareness of school attendance levels and other related matters.
- Laura Burchett is the governor with specific attendance responsibility.

Parents/Carers

- Send your child to school, on time, every day.
- To contact school on the first day of absence as soon as possible and maintain on-going contact with school throughout any period of absence.
- Parents and Carers can only explain absences; they cannot authorise them. The school decides whether explanations about absences are acceptable and if they can be authorised.

- To make medical or dental appointments out of school hours where possible. If this is not possible their child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- To provide medical evidence of medical or dental appointments causing absence from school if requested.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.
- Avoid booking family holidays during term-time.

Liaising with External Agencies

Research has shown that schools who work in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater positive impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of family, individual or community circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

Agencies to be used where appropriate in individual cases could be:

- Early Help Workers
- Social Care/Children's Services
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Local Police/PCSO
- Educational Psychologists
- Children's and Young Peoples Nursing Team
- Plus others depending on individual circumstances

Encouraging attendance through good practice and rewards

Achieving good attendance at our school is a key priority for us and our aim is to celebrate, reward and encourage good attendance in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session using Attendance Codes (/ or \- present, I- ill, O-unauthorised, C-authorised circumstances, L-late, U-unauthorised late after registration closed, M-medical and G-Holiday not authorised).
- Working with parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- Inviting parents/carers to a meeting when attendance and/or punctuality is a concern to discuss support available.
- Agreeing school attendance action plans with parents and pupils and maintaining regular review processes and communication with parents as appropriate.
- Regular analysis by the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team of attendance data which enables speedy and timely responses by the school.
- A system of motivational rewards which recognise general patterns of good attendance and acknowledge improvements agreed in individual circumstances.
 - which may include regular/weekly class incentives to promote overall class level attendance.
 - End of Year award for pupils with 100% attendance
 - Regular monitoring and awards for improved attendance with identified pupils

If there are Child Protection/Safeguarding concerns, then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures will be followed immediately.

Responding to non-attendance and persistence absence

It is hoped that all pupils will maintain good attendance. However, when a pupil does not attend regularly and/or punctually, the school needs to respond effectively. When a pupil's attendance becomes a concern within any monitoring period, the following processes will be implemented:

- A telephone call will be made to the parent or carer to discuss concerns regarding non-attendance. Depending on the circumstances of the absence, the parent may be invited to attend a meeting in school.
- Persistent absences may require a School Attendance Panel meeting and will include any appropriate staff, parent and pupil and may include a school Governor. The aim of the meeting will be to identify and explore solutions for the barriers that are preventing the pupil from attending school and to agree a plan to secure improved attendance. Consideration will be given at the meeting as to any support that may be provided for the pupil and their family by the school and possibly other external agencies to secure improved attendance. Specific targets will be agreed and a review process will be established to monitor the effectiveness of the plan. It is hoped that this process will provide support to the parent and the pupil to improve school attendance.
- Where persistent absence continues the case will be discussed initially with the Head Teacher and further action planned. In some circumstances, a request for a fixed penalty fine may be sought.

Lateness

We encourage all pupils to arrive at school punctually and prepared for the school day.

School doors open at 8:45 for all children and registration starts at 8:55. Pupils arriving after 9:00 will need to be signed in through the office. Registers will close twenty five minutes from the beginning of registration.

Responding to persistent late arrivals

It is hoped that all pupils will arrive at school punctually. Lessons start at the beginning of the day and children who are late miss out on the start of the day which includes key learning and socialisation with staff and peers. However, when a pupil persistently arrives late, the school needs to respond effectively.

- A telephone call will be made to the parent or carer by the Pupil Support Officer to discuss concerns regarding late arrival. Depending on the outcomes of these discussions, the parent may be invited to attend a meeting in school.
- Persistent lateness may require a School Attendance Panel meeting and will include any appropriate staff, parent and pupil. The aim of the meeting will be to identify and explore solutions for the barriers that are preventing the pupil from arriving at school on time and to agree a plan to secure improved punctuality. Consideration will be given at the meeting to any support that may be provided for the pupil and their family by the school and possibly other external agencies to secure improved punctuality and attendance. Specific improvement targets will be agreed and a review process will be established to monitor the effectiveness of the plan. It is hoped that this process will provide support to the parent and pupil to improve punctuality.

The school must follow relevant legal procedures and guidance with regards to matters of school attendance. The following factual information is intended to provide useful guidance for parents when considering our attendance policy and procedures.

Authorised or Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. Unauthorised absence is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Family Holidays/Leave of Absence

Parents should not book family holidays in term time. Research shows that any term time absence can significantly affect the progress and learning outcomes for your child and should be avoided. Parents do not have an entitlement to remove their child/children from school during term-time.

If a parent wishes to apply for a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances, they should put this in writing and submit to the Head Teacher at least four weeks in advance of the period for which leave is to be requested. The Head Teacher will then contact the parent/s to discuss the request as soon as possible following the receipt of the application of leave of absence. Parents are advised not to book a leave of absence prior to contact from the Head Teacher.

In these circumstances, each request will be considered individually and will consider the exceptional circumstance, the age of the child, previous attendance patterns, the educational progress and learning outcomes of the child and parental views. Any meeting to discuss a request for term-time absence may be attended by a Governor depending on the circumstances as described above.

Requests for authorised leave of absence are likely only to be granted in exceptional circumstances.

If a request is not granted and the parent proceeds to take the child out of school, the absence will not be authorised. In these circumstances, the following guidance will apply:

The Use of Penalty Warnings and Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time (see also Fixed Penalty Notices, Code of Conduct):

- Penalty Warnings and Penalty Notices may be used for unauthorised absences including those for holidays taken without permission
- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents and carers a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £80.00 or £160.00

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

Resolving Disagreements

Where there is a lack of agreement between the school and the Local Authority as to the appropriateness of issuing a Penalty Warning letter or a Penalty Notice, the matter will be referred to the County Legal Proceedings Panel whose decision shall be final.