



ATTENDANCE POLICY

AIMS:

To raise the profile of attendance by encouraging and promoting a positive attitude to school attendance so that all Bright Futures School pupils are encouraged to achieve a good rate of attendance in order to maximize opportunities available to them throughout their time at school.

OBJECTIVES:

- To foster a high expectation of pupils' attendance in school on a regular basis.
- To raise family awareness of the importance of a child's regular attendance.
- To inform parents/guardians/carers as to the need for legitimate reasons for absence.
- To maintain an accurate system for registering and monitoring attendance.
- To maintain a clear policy on attendance which is known to all staff, pupils and parents/guardians/carers.
- To maintain clear communication both within the school and between school and parents

Under Section 44 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he or she is a registered pupil. Failure to discharge this duty may result in the LA prosecuting the parents and each parent may be fined.

Absences are considered either to be:

- **Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a **good reason** and that the school has either given approval in advance for the pupil to be away or that the explanation given afterwards is accepted as satisfactory justification.
- **Unauthorised absences** are those, which the school **does not consider reasonable** and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy, absences which have not been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to receive a mark in the register.

The Head of Learning is responsible for deciding if an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

All Absences should be reported to the school before 9.20am on the first day of absence, otherwise the school will phone parents /carers in order to safeguard pupils.

PROCEDURES:

Bright Futures School follows government guidance around pupil attendance and the school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- **Illness.** Parents or carers should inform the school as soon as possible, (by phone or email office@brightfutureschool.co.uk) if their child is unwell and unable to attend school. In line with NHS guidance, if a child has been ill through vomiting or diarrhoea they should stay at home for 48 hours from the last bout, to lessen the risk of infecting others.
- **Holiday.** Bright Futures School will only authorise **leave of absence** in exceptional circumstances. Any request should be made to the school in advance in writing. If the Head of Learning grants a leave request, it will be for the Head of Learning to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.
- **Lateness.** Children must arrive on time at 9.15am to be given a mark for that session, unless the lateness is unavoidable.
- **Religious Observance.** We are guided by DfE statutory guidance and advice on school attendance which states: Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.

If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

The Head of Learning marks the Attendance Register twice daily (morning and afternoon). Each pupil is marked either /\ (present) or the approved DfE code to show absence (as set out in the back of the school register.) The Head of Learning monitors attendance of all pupils, including submitting percentage attendance printouts and reports to the Management team on a termly and annual basis. All attendance issues are regularly discussed at Management meetings and advice sought from the Local Authority Welfare (Attendance) Officer where appropriate.

Framework for managing problematic attendance

- A pupil identified as a being of concern in terms of his/her attendance is flagged to the appropriate member of school staff to undertake initial actions with parent(s), pupil and/or school staff including standard letters home and invitations to parenting meetings.
- When initial internal actions have not improved attendance an interagency planning meeting with the pupil, parents, LA Attendance Officer and social worker (if appropriate) is arranged by school at which a plan is formulated to assist the family.
- Where concern regarding attendance continues following the planned intervention, the statutory process should be considered.
- The Attendance Policy identifies how individual cases are managed and how we work proactively with parents/carers to ensure that they understand why attendance is important.
- We will implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME) and off rolling and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children and young people.

PENALTY NOTICES

The 2007 Regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.

Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 21 days; or £120 if they pay within 28 days.

Further guidance on attendance matters can be found under 'Advice on school attendance' at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance>

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