



Borden Church of England Primary School

Part of the UNITAS Collaboration

School Lane Borden Sittingbourne Kent ME9 8JS

Attendance Policy 2016

Reviewed	Ratified	Next review
<i>Spring 2016</i>		<i>Spring 2017</i>

Chair of Governors		Head of School	
<i>signed</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>signed</i>	<i>date</i>

Purpose of the Policy

Good practice in our school can be seen when children attend for at least 95% of possible sessions (excluding unavoidable closure dates) and the governors and staff recognise that children can often under-achieve when attendance falls below this level.

Home/School Partnership

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education. (Section 36, 1944 Education Act). In most cases children attend school and therefore parents should ensure that their children attend, and stay at school.

At Borden CEPS the staff and governors endeavour to support parents in this responsibility by:

- a. providing a comprehensive induction programme for new entrants and parents to help children come to school willingly with a positive attitude
- b. encouraging parents to discuss any attendance related problems with the class teacher/Head of School
- c. aiming to ensure that the school is bright, clean, warm and welcoming
- d. teachers/classroom assistants available from 8:45am in classrooms/cloakroom areas to greet/help settle the children
- e. informing parents of any changes in the school routine by text, e mail newsletter and the notice board by the main gate and Willow's gate e.g. school trips, church services etc

Reporting Absences

It is the parents' responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence.

At Borden parents are expected to contact the School Office on the first day of absence giving as much information as is available at that time. However, if a parent has not contacted the school by 9.30 on the first day of absence a telephone call will be made to the parent to ascertain the reason for the absence. If the absence is prolonged, interim information would be appreciated, so that the school can help with homework or other necessary arrangements.

On their return to school children should bring a letter from their parents confirming the reason for their absence and giving any other appropriate information.

If the school is concerned regarding irregular attendance, the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be enlisted. The Education Welfare Officer in consultation with the Head of School and Governing Body will follow Kent CC guidelines and continued unauthorised absences may result in the use of Penalty Notices. (Please see Appendix 1)

Registration

Under regulation 3 of the Pupils' Registration Regulations 1956, all schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The 1991 Regulations also state that registers must state whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The session times for Borden CEP School are:

	Infants	Juniors
Morning Session	8:55am - 12:00 noon	8:55am - 12:15
Afternoon Session	1:00pm - 3:15pm	1:15pm - 3:15pm

Morning School Procedures

- Pupils should not arrive in School before 8.45 a.m. The gate is locked until 8.45am when a member of staff will open it.
- Children will enter the school when the gate opens to allow them to hang up bags, etc and organise themselves for the start of the school day at 8:55am.
- Any child arriving at school after the gate is locked at 8:55am, must go into school through the School Office.
- Any child who is not present in the classroom by 9.15 a.m. will be marked absent.
- The completed register is collected and sent to the School Office with a child.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. (Section 199, Education Act 1993).

The education (pupil registration) (England) (amendment) regulations 2013, which came into force on 1 September 2013, removed references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the notional threshold of ten school days. The amendments made clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist. Therefore our school will only authorise holidays in line with these regulations. Exceptional circumstances will only be agreed very rarely.

To help parents distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence the following guidelines are included. If after reading these guidelines you are still in doubt please contact the Head of School.

What is accepted as exceptional circumstances

Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave. Circumstances will be considered sympathetically on an individual basis.

Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.

Absences to visit family members is not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives, the school will authorise leave up to a maximum of three days.

What is not accepted as exceptional circumstances

Holidays where employees are not granted leave by their employer during school holidays

Holidays booked by other family members.

Savings made by holidays during term times.

Birthdays, weddings abroad

Other unacceptable reasons for absence

Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell

Absence of siblings if one child is ill

Absence of sibling who attends another school where absence is due to school closure eg development day/snow

Parental illness [alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school – emergencies excepted]

Transport issues eg breakdown of a car

Oversleeping

Inadequate clothing/uniform

Confusion over school dates

Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons

Child's/family birthday

Shopping trip Impact of absence

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on:

- a) your child's learning
- b) other pupils learning, as resources including teacher and teaching assistant are diverted onto returning pupils

Impact of absence

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Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments

If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (ie. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or on production of an appointments card. A book is maintained by the School Office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or The education (pupil registration) (England) (an Absence through illness

Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)

The most common cause of absence is for diarrhoea and/or vomiting. Children should stay off school for 48 hours after last bout (this is 24 hours after the last bout plus 24 hours recovery time). This is to avoid widespread contamination. Please check your child understands why they need to wash and dry their hands frequently.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

Children must be in class by 8.55 a.m. each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. The school gates will be shut by 8:55 am. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded. Obviously the school will be sympathetic if this is for an emergency reason.

If however a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the class teacher/Head of School in order to reach a satisfactory solution. Late is after 8.55am until 9:15am. After 9.15am the child is recorded as absent without authorisation.

97%+	Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in School. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.
95%	Average – Strive to build on this.
85-90%	Low – Absence is seriously affecting attainment and progress at school. School will contact parents and seek ways of working together to improve attendance. This may include a meeting with the school's Headteacher.
80-85%	Poor – The school regards this as a serious concern. A will be letter sent which includes the statement "further absence won't be authorised." A doctors letter will be required in order to authorise any absence.
Below 80%	Unacceptable – Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning and that of others. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called and a KFSF may be discussed. If improvement is not achieved a referral will be made to the Attendance Service (KCC) Penalty Notice considered where absence is not authorised.

Penalty notices for absence

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

Encouraging Attendance

Borden CEP School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration.
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare if the irregular attendance continues

Quality Assurance

This policy will be working if:

- Good attendance is achieved and sustained throughout the school
- Registers are maintained according to agreed guidelines
- Parents understand and co-operate with the school policy, consulting the Head of School regarding any areas of doubt
- Staff understand their role in reporting any unauthorised absence so that appropriate steps may be taken
- Staff and governors are involved in policy decisions/review

Appendix 1

Penalty Notices to address poor attendance at school

PENALTY NOTICES TO ADDRESS POOR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL- CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

- Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LEA officers, Head of Schools (& Deputy and Assistant Head of Schools authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27th February 2004.
- The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform with all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all Equal Opportunities legislation.
- The LEA has the prime responsibility for developing the code of conduct within which all partners named in the Act will operate

Rationale:

- Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.
- In law an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at a school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Sec 444, Education Act 1996 or Sec 36, the Children's Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.
- The Attendance and Behaviour Service discharge the responsibility for taking legal action against parents/carers on behalf of the LEA.
- Parents and pupils are supported at school and LEA level to overcome barriers to regular attendance through a range of assessment and intervention strategies. Sanctions of any nature are for use only where parental co-operation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem.
- Sanctions are used as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improvement.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued:

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per pupil per academic year.
- In cases where families contain more than one poor-attending pupil multiple issue may occur but this will be the subject of careful consideration and co-ordination.
- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- parentally-condoned absences

- excessive holidays in term-time
- excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
- persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed).

To ensure consistent delivery of Penalty Notices the following criteria will apply:

- at least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current term.
- other than in specific circumstances* the liable parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement

* the deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without / against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not/would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions.

Schools must consider every aspect of a pupil's case before considering whether a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. This must include strategic discussions with the assigned EWO and any other attendance-support staff who have involvement with or knowledge of the pupil/family.

Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices:

Following consultation it was agreed that:

- The Attendance and Behaviour Service will issue all Penalty Notices in Kent. This will ensure consistent and equitable delivery, help to maintain good school-home relationships and ensure that there is not conflict with other enforcement sanctions.
- Penalty Notices will only be issued by post and never as an on the spot action; this to satisfy that all evidential requirements are in place and to meet Health and Safety requirements.

ABS will receive requests to issue Penalty Notices from schools, Kent Police and neighbouring LEAs. These requests will be actioned provided that:

- all relevant information is supplied in the specified manner,
- the circumstances of the pupil's absence meets all the requirements of this Code of Conduct,
- the issue of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other enforcement sanctions already being processed.

ABS will respond to all requests within 10 school days of receipt and where all criteria are met will:

- issue a formal written warning to the parent/carer of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued.
- in the same letter set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
- issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 15 day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.

Procedure for withdrawing Penalty Notices:

Once issued, a Penalty Notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- proof has been established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person
- the use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this Code of Conduct

Payment of Penalty Notices:

- Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.
- Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent/carer liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the penalty Notice.
- Payment of a Penalty Notice within 28 days is £60 and payment after this time but within 21 days is £120.
- The LEA retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).

Non-payment of Penalty Notices:

- Non-payment of a Penalty notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice and will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of Sec 444, 1996 Education Act.

Policy & Publicity

- Deployment of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Authority's Attendance Policy.
- All school Attendance Policies will include information on the deployment of Penalty Notices and this will be brought to the attention of all parents.
- The LEA will publicise the introduction of Penalty Notices through the local media and through information to parents