



## Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2017

Reviewed	Ratified by GB (if applicable)	Next review
01/11/17		01/11/18

To be authorised by:	Chair of Governors		Governing Body, committee or individual governor		Headteacher	✓
<i>Linked Policies:</i>						

### Statement of Intent

**Borden CE Primary School** is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Trust, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Borden CE Primary School.

### Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

- It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known.
- Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.
- Where a child is absent for 10 sessions (5 days) due to illness, medical evidence is requested (appointment card, prescription are examples of medical evidence)

Pupils are expected to arrive by **8.45am**. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

## The Role of the School Staff

At Borden CE Primary School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The attendance Officer has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure:

- Registers are taken at 8:55am and 1 pm for KS1/1:15pm for KS2
- Registers are marked as / for present am session
- Registers are marked \ for present pm session
- If a child is not present at registration the school office staff will record an N code
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Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

It is the responsibility of The Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided by 9.15 am, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Reason for absence is appropriate and if necessary ascertain more information as to the reason as 'ill/sick/unwell/poorly' will not be accepted.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven-day reply deadline before the absence is authorised ('O' code)
- From September 2015, the government classes any pupil who misses 10% or more of all sessions as a persistent absentee, and to comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the school is required to keep a register of these pupils and give their names to the Local Authority.
- Parents are informed termly (seasonally) of the child's attendance figure with a traffic light system in place:  
100% - 96%: Green  
90% - 95.9%: Amber  
Less than 90%: Red

## Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance

- 96 - 100% attendance (if attendance is declining) – the attendance lead to investigate and notify Headteacher of concerns. **The attendance Officer** to contact parent if appropriate.
- 90 - 96% attendance (If attendance is declining) – letters to be sent home to advise of low attendance.
- If attendance has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will invite parents in for a formal meeting with the Head Teacher / Family Support and Welfare officer.
- If support is requested or attendance does not improve the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.

- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification.

## **Lateness**

At **Borden CEP** the register is taken at 8:55am and 1 pm for KS1/1:15pm for KS2. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9:15 am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

If a child is late due to a medical appointment (e.g. doctor or dentist) this will be coded as a Medical (M) once the evidence of appointment is seen.

## **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:**

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of the child. Failure to pay in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

## **Authorising Absence**

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation for absence is received, the absence will not be authorised ('O').

There are many reasons why parents may request leave of absence but it should only be requested in **exceptional circumstances** and this should be done at least 2 weeks in advance.

**In accordance with Government regulations the school will not authorise holiday requests during term time.**

If a parent needs to discuss any exceptional circumstances for an application for leave, an appointment may be made with the Head Teacher. **Leave of absence is not an automatic right.** Each case will be judged on its own merits and the Head Teacher's decision is final. Once the decision to not authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken regardless, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent, for each child that is taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the local authority.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- 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
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

10 unauthorised absences in a period can be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

- ½ day = 1 unauthorised absence
- 1 day = 2 unauthorised absences

**Therefore 1 week = 10 unauthorised absences**

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

**Local Authority Action may include: -**

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

**Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance**

**Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

**Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

## **Children Missing Education**

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below: -

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances: -

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

**Appendix 1 Late letter (Code L)**

**Appendix 2 Late letter (Code U)**

**Appendix 3 Absence Letter**

**Appendix 4 School Attendance Meeting Letter**

**Appendix 5 School Letter Warning re: Penalty Notice Referral**

**Appendix 6 Unauthorised absence confirmation of PN request**

**Appendix 7a Response to Leave Request (Not Authorising)**

**Appendix 7b Response to Leave Request submitted retrospectively (Not Authorising)**

**Appendix 8 Unauthorised leave confirmation of PN request**

**Appendix 9 School letter where they believe a holiday was taken**

**Appendix 10 Traveller Attendance letter**

**Appendix 11 Traveller Absence due to travelling**

**Appendix 12 School Referral Pathway**

## Appendix 1- Late letter (Code L)

Dear .....

**Re:** .....

I am writing to express my concern over the ..... number of occasions that .....has been late to school. Below for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days ..... was late (Code L).

- ..... dates of lates before (code L)

Total lates before registration closed: ..... half day sessions. At <insert

name of school> the register is taken at **...am** and **...pm**.

A pupil's lateness will seriously disrupt their learning and can be embarrassing. Lessons begin at 9am and arriving after this time will mean they have missed the main input for the lesson. There is clear evidence of a link between poor/regular late attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

I am sure you share my concern and would wish to work with the school to improve punctuality. If we can help in any way, perhaps via our School Nurse or Family Liaison Officer, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

**Appendix 2- late letter (Code U)**

Dear .....

**Re:** .....

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that ..... has arrived after the register has been closed (after 9.15am). Below for your information is a summary of attendance indicating the days ..... was late (code U).

- dates of lates after

Total lates after registration closed: ..... half day sessions.

At <insert name of school> the register is taken at 9 am and is closed at 9.15 am for the morning session and taken again at ..... pm and closed at ..... pm for the afternoon session. Pupils that arrive after the register has closed will be marked 'U' which records the absence as unauthorised for that session.

Arriving after the register has closed is seriously disrupting your child's learning and is impacting on their overall attendance. Lessons begin at 9am and arriving after this time will mean they have missed the main input for the lesson. There is clear evidence of a link between poor/ regular late attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

Persistent late arrival may lead to a referral to a Penalty Notice or a referral to the Local Authority School Attendance Liaison Officer for further action and possible prosecution.

If ..... continues to arrive late after the register has closed we will contact you to arrange a meeting at school.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

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### Appendix 3 Absence letter

Dear .....

**Re:** .....

I am writing to express my concern over the number of occasions that ..... has been absent from school. I attach for your information a summary of attendance indicating the days ..... was absent. .... attendance is .....%. The expectation is that no child misses more than 7 school days in an academic year and therefore drops below the government threshold of 96%.

From September 2015, the government classes any pupil who misses 10% or more of all sessions as a persistent absentee, and to comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 we are required to keep a register of these pupils and give their names to the Local Authority.

A pupil's absence can seriously disrupt their learning, not only do they miss out on teaching while they are away but they are less prepared for future lessons when they return. . There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

If we do not see an improvement you will be invited into a meeting with the Family Liaison Officer, where a referral to Early Help or PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) may be made.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 4 School attendance meeting letter

Dear .....

**Re:** .....

Despite previous warnings, I note with concern that your child's attendance at school has made no significant improvement. ....'s attendance at school is currently .....% which means he/she has missed ..... half day sessions for authorised absence and ..... half day sessions for unauthorised absences. This will have an impact on your child's education which we cannot ignore.

As there has been no improvement in ....'s attendance, I must advise you that further absences from school as a result of illness will require medical evidence (e.g. a copy of a prescription, doctor/dentist appointment card). If medical evidence is not provided, further absences will be marked as unauthorised.

I am inviting you to attend a School Attendance Meeting. The time and date have been set for ..... at ..... It is important that you attend this meeting for us to explore the issues around poor attendance. The meeting will be attended by

.....

If this appointment is inconvenient, I would be grateful if you could contact me on **PHONE NUMBER** so that a mutually convenient time can be arranged.

If you do not attend this meeting and ....'s absence continues to deteriorate, a referral may be made to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) for further action and possible prosecution.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 5 School letter warning re: Penalty Notice referral

Dear .....

**Re:** .....

At our school we consider attendance of utmost importance and I am therefore bringing this information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that ..... has been absent from school for a total of .....unauthorised half day sessions. I refer you to the legislation regarding Penalty Notices.

‘As from 2005, Kent Local Authority (LA) introduced Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school of at least 10 sessions (5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions.’ A separate Penalty Notice can be issued for each parent and for each child.

On receipt of the Notice, the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the LA.

Please note that this is a warning letter that a Penalty Notice could be requested if a total of 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) are reached.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

If further unauthorised absence occurs you will be invited in for a meeting at the school.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## **Appendix 6 Unauthorised absence confirmation of PN request**

Dear .....

**Re:** .....

With reference to our letter dated ....., ..... has now reached a total of ..... half day sessions of unauthorised absence. As a result, we will now be requesting a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent for each child. Yours

sincerely

Headteacher

## **Appendix 7a Response to leave request (not authorising)- 5 days or more.**

Dear .....

### **Request for leave during Term-time For the attention of parents of: .....**

I have received your request to take ..... out of school for a family holiday between .....date and ..... date, a total of ..... school sessions.

From 2013 the Department of Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances"

The school's attendance policy confirms that:

- Agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body.
- Each case will be judged on its merits.
- My decision is final,
- Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

I have considered your request but I am writing to confirm that on this occasion the leave will not be authorised. If you decide to take ..... out of school I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

**Appendix 7b Response to leave request submitted retrospectively (not authorising)- 5 days or more.**

Dear .....

**Request for leave during Term-time**  
**For the attention of parents of: .....**

You failed to apply in advance for permission for ..... to be absent from school.

From 2013 the Department of Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will not be authorised as the regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances"

The school's attendance policy confirms that:

- Agreement to each request is at my discretion, acting on behalf of the Governing Body.
- Each case will be judged on its merits.
- My decision is final,
- Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively

As stated above, I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively and I will be making a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child and the amount of the penalty will be £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

**Appendix 8-Unauthorised leave confirmation of PN request**

Dear .....

**Re: .....DOB .....**

With reference to our letter dated..... , the leave of absence taken between ..... date and ..... date has now been recorded as unauthorised absence, and as a result a Penalty Notice has now been requested.

A separate Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent for each child. Yours

sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 9 School letter where they believe a holiday was taken

Dear .....

**Re:** .....

You failed to apply in advance for permission for ..... to be absent from school.

From 2013 the Department of Education has amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence, except in exceptional circumstances. (State why you are treating this absence as a family holiday and/or why there are no exceptional circumstances).

Requests for holiday on term-time will not be authorised as the Regulations only allow me to authorise absence (leave) in "exceptional circumstances".

I am unable to authorise leave retrospectively therefore this absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence, where a child has 10 unauthorised sessions within 100 school session a Penalty Notice may be issued.

The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty instead of being prosecuted for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of the receipt of this Notice it will be £60 per parent, per child. If you pay this penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with this offence, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix 10 Traveller absence letter

Dear .....

### **Traveller Absence**

**Re: .....**

I am writing to say how concerned I am over the number of times ..... has been absent from school. This academic year ..... has missed ..... authorised half day sessions and .....unauthorised half day sessions, achieving an overall attendance rate of .....%.

Traveller children have to attend school for 380 sessions (190 days) each year, which is the same for all children and you are at risk of being referred to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer if .....’s attendance falls below 90%. I am unable to authorise any absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances or if you will be travelling for occupational purposes and agree this with the school in advance.

If you would like to speak to me about.....’s attendance, please telephone the school to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## **Appendix 11 Traveller absence due to travelling**

Dear .....

### **Traveller Absence**

**Re: .....**

Thank you for contacting me to say that ..... will be absent from school from ..... as you will be travelling due to your work.

The law allows me to authorise .....’s absence if your trade or business means that you have to travel from place to place. However you have not let me know when ..... is likely to return to school. Unless you contact me during the next 10 days to confirm a date, I will refer ..... to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education.

After 20 days absence, there may be grounds to take .....’s name off of the school roll and you will have to re-apply for a school place when you return.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

### Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

