



LEIGH
Academies Trust



Bearsted Primary Academy

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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November 2022	1.0	Policy Issued
September 2023	1.1	Policy Revised- No changes made
January 2024	1.2	Added paragraph- Removing a pupil off roll Added paragraph- Education for Health Needs including Mental Health

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and we will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards the academy. To this end, we strive to make our academy a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

1.2 There is a relationship between attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress.

1.3 The academy is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life.

1.4 The Education Act 1996 states that:

S.576:

“Meaning of “parent”.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—

(a) who is not a parent of them but who has parental responsibility for them,
or (b) who has care of them.”

S.7:

“Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

(a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
(b) to any special educational needs they may have,
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

S.444:

“Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence.”

1.5 The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets.

1.6 There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with the Principal as part of the monitoring and review process.

1.7 The Principal and senior leadership team will ensure that the governing body's objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data, surfacing trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

1.8 Academy staff are responsible to ensure they promote the academy's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, enable the academy to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

1.9 Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend the academy regularly and punctually.

1.10 Pupils have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

1.11 The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the academy encourages and enables good attendance
- How the academy monitors and reviews attendance
- How the academy monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

2. ENCOURAGING AND ENABLING GOOD ATTENDANCE

2.1 The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the academy is a place to which the children want to come: that the academy is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

2.2 It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at the academy. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the academy and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending the academy.

2.3 All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised.

2.4 Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports at Parent Consultations, attendance is discussed. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept and are passed onto subsequent schools.

3. MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE

3.1 The academy will consider annually, in accordance with its support needs in relation to attendance, whether it wishes to purchase a Traded Service from the Kent PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS). The academy will be able to continue to access PIAS Statutory Service in accordance with its referral criteria.

3.2 The academy will log conversations with parents on Bromcom about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.

3.3 By law, academies must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The academy will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

3.4 To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the academy may request additional information or evidence, e.g. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

3.5 Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Administrative Staff.

3.6 All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes, the Administrative Staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

3.7 Attendance data is held electronically on Bromcom, accessible by the Trust, Principal, Senior Leadership Team and Administrative Staff who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

3.8 The Principal and Vice Principal monitor the attendance of pupils every week. The flow diagram and letters appended, outline the academy's approach for monitoring and enabling attendance.

3.9 Returns of academy data are made daily to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

3.10 The academy sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

4. PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS

4.1 The Principal and Vice Principal monitor the lateness of pupils as being punctual to the academy is crucial. Lateness into the academy causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at the

academy on time. The gates open at 8.30 a.m. for all year groups and close at 8:40 am so there is a window of 10 minutes where the children can come into the academy.

4.2 The academy day starts at 8:30 a.m. for all year groups. Pupils who arrive after 08:40 will be recorded as late to school (L code). The Registers close at 9.00 a.m. and after this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code). The Afternoon begins at 1:00 p.m. for all year groups. Pupils who arrive after this will be recorded as late to school (L code). Registers close at 10 mins after the end of lunch respectively. After this, lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code).

4.3 Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Vice Principal will write to the parents/carers using the appended letter about punctuality, including a copy of the child's registration certificate, and stating the total minutes late over a determined period.

4.4 If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to PIAS.

5. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

5.1 The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance, and it is a requirement for the Principal to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Principal.

5.2 Wherever possible, parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time.

5.3 If a child is absent from the academy for any reason the parent must inform the academy in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible of absence and reason for it. Such calls are always logged on Bromcom and the class teacher informed.

5.4 Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the academy received no reason/explanation or if the academy has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Leave of Absence

6.1 The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

6.2 Principals **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

6.3 Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and

the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

6.4 Principals will determine how many school days a child may be absent from the academy if the leave is granted.

6.5 The academy can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.

6.6 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

6.7 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

6.8 All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the PIAS at Kent County Council.

6.9 Kent Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Kent County Council’s Non School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. A copy of which can be found at https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/62126/KCC-Penalty-Notice-Code-of-Conduct.pdf

6.10 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Kent County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996 or prosecution under Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

6.11 It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 per child if paid within 21 days).

7. WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days

of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

8. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

8.1 Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the academy to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to Kent County Council 's via <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-attendance/children-missing-education>

8.2 Reasonable steps to be taken by academy staff include:

- Telephone calls to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at the academy without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other academies/schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through academy contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family

8.3 All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file

9. Removing a Pupil from Roll

9.1 As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from academy roll due to continued serious absence.

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days, immediately following an authorised leave of absence, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll. (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

Where a pupil has failed to attend the Academy for 20 school days or more and absence is unauthorised, and there are no reasonable grounds for the pupil not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the pupil is, and if unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts we will remove from roll. (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

10. Education for Health Needs including Mental Health

10.1 Where possible, a pupil's health needs - including mental health, will be managed by the Academy. If needs are unable to be met, a referral will be made under Section 19 of The Education Act 1996, where the Local Authority will start to arrange education.

If a pupil is away from school for 15 days or more because of their health needs, the Local Authority should arrange suitable alternative provision. ***DfE - Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs***

Whilst the duty of care for the pupil's education will sit with the Local Authority, the Academy will work closely with all medical professionals to ensure that health needs are fully supported and educational needs are being met.

11. IN CONCLUSION

11.1 It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our academy's success.

11.2 Bearsted Primary Academy greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The Academy is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

Bearsted Primary Academy Flowchart for Attendance Monitoring (escalation process)

MONITOR ATTENDANCE (every half term but more frequently if necessary)

Attendance falls below the expected academy attendance target of 97%

Stage 1 Letter: Send initial letter of concern to parents (include registration certificate*)

Send 'Praise' letter and continue to monitor

Monitor attendance over the next 3 weeks

Attendance Improves

Attendance Declines

Stage 2/3 Letter: Send 2nd/3rd letter to parents* advising that child's attendance is in danger of a persistent absentee, therefore the academy will closely monitor. Parents may be requested to provide medical evidence in order to support absences and the academy will continue to monitor over the next 10 days.

Send 'Praise' letter and continue to monitor

Monitor attendance over the next 10 days

Attendance Improves

Attendance Declines

Stage 4 Letter: Send Letter* inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss strategies to support an improvement (set internal 3 week target, request medical evidence or, offer School Interventions or Early Help if appropriate, record conversation and send letter to parents outlining actions to be taken by the academy and by parents.

Send 'Praise' letter and continue to monitor

Monitor attendance over the next 3 weeks

Attendance Improves

Attendance Declines

Stage 5 Letter: Send letter to parents* advising them that as attendance has not improved despite various supporting strategies, a discussion with PIAS service for possible further intervention.

Module One	Module One Attendance Letter- Highlight Letter Module One Attendance Letter <i>Non-Compulsory School Age-NCSA</i> Module One Attendance Letters- Unauthorised Holiday
Module Two-Six	Stage 1 Letter BPA Stage 2 Letter BPA Stage 3 <i>Persistent Absence</i> Letter BPA Stage 4 <i>Invite to Meeting</i> Letter BPA Stage 5- PA Referral Letter Attendance Improvement Letter