



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date: May 2024
Review Due: May 2025

Reviewed Annually

Ethos and Aims

Our school values relationships and knows they are essential to improving attendance. It is everyone's responsibility and we constantly strive to support families. We take appropriate, swift and effective actions for individuals and groups when we identify issues or potential issues.

At Bramford, we believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils, to ensure they can benefit fully from the Proud Traditions, Wide Horizons and High Achievement that Griffin Schools offer. We aim to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any barriers to this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. The school aims at 100% attendance for pupils and promotes good punctuality now and for the future.

Parents and carers should be aware that if they fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually they may be prosecuted under section 444 Education Act 1996 by the Local Authority.

Regular and punctual attendance provides the means for children to take advantage of all educational opportunities. It ensures continuity, promotes responsibility and a purpose which can be carried into adult life. A pupil who is late or absent misses the introduction to a lesson or a new concept, causes disruption to others and is likely to have missed the instructions to the lesson, thus putting themselves at a disadvantage.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school approach, culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents, Guardians and Pupils

Parents/carers of children of compulsory school age are legally required to ensure that they receive fulltime education. Parents/carers are also responsible for informing the school of any absence as soon as possible; the school expects to be contacted on each day of the absence. This can be done by telephoning the school, by personal contact, email or by written note. The reason for absence and when the child is expected to return to school should be stated. Pupils are expected to arrive at school punctually. Parents are expected to notify the school of changes to contact details and if there is a change in home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

All children in Years R-6 are expected to be in school 8.45am to 3.15pm.

Morning Registration is taken in class between:

Nursery 8.45am – 8.55am
Year R - 8.45am – 8.55am
KS1 - 8.45am – 8.55am
KS2 - 8.45 am – 8.55am

Afternoon Registration:

Nursery
Year R - 12.30pm – 12.35pm
Year 1 - 12.30pm – 12.35pm
Year 2 – 12.45pm – 12.50pm
Year 3 – 1pm – 1.05pm
Year 4 1.15pm – 1.20pm
KS2 - 1.30pm – 1.35pm

Gates will open at 8.35am and 3.05pm.

Should a child arrive after 9.25am they will be given an unauthorised absence mark (U Code).

Parents are expected to notify the school of changes to contact details and if there is a change in home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

Persistent lateness can be seen as absence and is managed in the same way as poor attendance by the school. Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school before the morning bell, prepared to begin the school day. Pupils should be in the playground no later than 5 minutes before the start of the school day at 8.45am. The main school playground doors are open from 8.35am to so they enter the school calmly ready for their day ahead. School starts 8.45am and the doors are closed at this time. Entry then is made via the main reception to school and lateness recorded.

Breakfast Club

Bramford runs an established Breakfast Club for Years R to 6. The aim of the club is to promote punctuality and good attendance. Breakfast Club may be a useful option for families where there are barriers to punctual attendance. Breakfast Club is run by trained school staff and is open from 7.30 am. There is a charge for this provision.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Newsletter, website and Our School App
- Track pupils who have an attendance below 95%
- Contact parents/carers as soon as concerns arise with the percentage of your child's attendance
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's/carer's concerns;
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;

- Contact parents/carers on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain absence;
- Systematically analyse data for patterns and potential issues forming.
- Communicate how absence equates to learning lost e.g. 15 hours of phonics etc.
- Ensure start of the day is positive.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. **Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body will be required.**
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition;
- Inform parents/carers of the % attendance of their child/children at parents evening and in their annual report;
- Liaise with outside agencies when necessary to support families.
- Invite parents/carers in for Attendance Clinics to discuss reasons for absence and to offer support to improve attendance.
- Invite parents to a school attendance concern meeting to discuss unauthorised absences prior to a referral being made.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order;
- Request medical evidence after 5 days of unexplained absences.
- Request medical evidence from persistent absentees following a medical evidence letter being sent.
- Offer pastoral support from our team or School Counsellor.

The attendance team is Clare Handley and Angela McEvoy-Cox.

School Attendance Lead

The designated senior member of staff responsible for attendance is supported by the school's attendance Lead. Attendance is regularly monitored so that pupils at risk of persistent absence can be identified. Investigations are made to understand the nature of problems, identifying how the school can support parents/carers in meeting their legal responsibility. A range of actions may be taken according to the percentage of absence and reasons provided by parents/carers: these may include referral to Early Help or Children's Services.

Class Teachers

Class Teachers fulfil the legal requirement to complete accurate registers. Registers are computerised and are taken before 9am and by 1pm (Years R,1,2 and 3) and 1.35pm (Years 3,4,5 and 6) registers close 30 minutes from the start of the school day. The time of late arrivals is noted and absences recorded, in the class register. Class Teachers contribute to procedures by promoting good attendance. Class teachers must immediately alert the Designated Lead for Child Protection if they believe or suspect that an absence may be due to attendance issues or concerns. They also look for patterns of absence and report concerns to attendance leads.

Governors

Regularly assess the effectiveness and challenge on analysis and strategies in place.

Leave of Absence

The school can approve absence. The school does not have to accept the parent/carers offered explanation as a valid cause for absence. There are certain circumstances outlined in the DfE guidelines that the school categorises as authorised absence. The guidelines are based on the needs of the community and the kinds of reasons parent/carers may wish their children to take leave of absence. The school follows the guidelines for authorising absence as listed below:

- Illness, emergency medical, dental and hospital appointments. It is expected that routine check-ups, including hospital review appointments should, as far as possible, be made during holiday periods or after school hours.
- Family bereavements
- Attending a religious observance
- Off-site activities (These fall into two categories; educational visits or individual activities e.g. an examination)
- Suspensions (Suspension pupils are treated as authorised absence. They will remain on the school's register unless permanently excluded when the situation has to be reviewed)

NB. Bramford does not authorise a leave of absence for extended periods during term times e.g. extended holidays or visiting family abroad.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Any student in Bramford Primary identified as having attendance below 90% will have all further absence unauthorised on schools register.

Medical Evidence

On/after the third day of absence a letter will be sent requesting medical evidence and a return to school date. If a child's attendance becomes a cause for concern, the parents/carers will be invited to attend an attendance clinic to discuss any issues with the Schools Attendance Lead and/or member of the schools senior leadership team.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. (90% or less) Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. Work missed during absence may be sent home to be completed.

Unauthorised Absences

The 1996 Education Act clearly states, “if any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, the parents/cares of the child shall be guilty of an offence”. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 also introduced the use of penalty notices as an additional sanction to address the problem of poor school attendance. Failure to ensure your child’s regular attendance at school may result in prosecution in the courts or a penalty notice being issued.

In the event of 10 unauthorised sessions recorded, a referral may be made to LA. If your child incurs 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a six-week period, a penalty notice may be issued. The amount payable is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice, within 28 days, will result in a court prosecution for your child’s irregular school attendance.

Lateness

Learning and registration begins at 8.45am. Many classes enter the building just before this time to enable the pupils to prepare for the day. All lateness is recorded and lateness after the registers close is marked as absence. If a pupil regularly arrives late for school we monitor and offer support to develop strategies to improve their punctuality.

Late Collection of Children

Persistent late collections are monitored and the school attempts to support parents/carers with this by helping to develop strategies to improve punctuality in collecting their children. Bramford operates an ASP (After School Provision) which may be useful for families who are unable to collect their children on time from school however it is not a drop in facility and pupils must register to attend. Fees apply for this provision.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you or arrange a call or meeting.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Lead and/or a member of the senior management team if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to our Attendance Consultant and/or the Local Authority if attendance moves below 93%.

Telephone number: 01384 818915 or email address info@bramford-gst.org

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence. We need to have your contact numbers at all times. You have a duty to notify school as soon as possible of any changes to contact details.

Holidays in Term Time:

We operate the DfE zero tolerance approach to extended holidays and we notify parents/carers of this so that they can make an informed decision about removing children from school for this reason. We refer children with unauthorised extended holiday absence to the local authority who arranges for fixed penalty fines to be issued. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the fine may result in the Local Authority prosecuting. An unauthorised absence referral will be made to the EIO (Education Investigation Officer for the Local Authority)

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless –

- (a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
- (b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

In light of the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulations, Bramford Primary School will only grant leave where parents can prove exceptional circumstances.

All applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least 5 school days prior to the requested leave date. Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing.

A general guide for parent's, is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time would not be authorised. On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register.

Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5 day notice will result in all absence being recorded as (O) (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

Penalty Notice Fines issued by the Local Authority

The Education Investigation Service at the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice Fine of up to £120 (per parent/per child) or instigate legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court in the following circumstances:

- Where an excluded child is identified in a public place in the first 6 days of an exclusion
- Where a Formal Warning Notice has previously been issued regarding unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence is accrued
- Where there is recorded unauthorised term time leave of absence/holiday leave

Further information regarding Penalty Notice Fines and other enforcement proceedings relating to school attendance can be obtained from the Education Investigation Service (01384 813417).

School closely monitors everyone's attendance and lateness. Issues related to pupil attendance are considered everyone's responsibility and regular reviews are in place and actions taken are time related.

By working together, we can ensure that every child achieves their very best outcomes and achievement in all areas and great attendance. The two go hand in hand.