

Bell Farm Primary School

Attendance and Registration Policy



The staff of Bell Farm Primary School are committed to developing a sound partnership with the Local Authority, parents, pupils, governors, and others, to build a school which serves the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.

All pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. This reflects the UN Convention – The Right of the Child, by ensuring all children have a right to primary education.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school 100% of the time, unless an absence is authorised by the Headteacher;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- discuss with their class teacher any problems preventing them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons that have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage full school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually; prepared for the school day and that they have completed their homework;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school;
- contact the school whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that school staff will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- encourage good attendance;

We expect that the designated member of school staff will:

- provide, a safe learning environment;
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor all pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, to express their concern and to clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer on-going irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service;

Term time leave of absence

If an absence during term time is unavoidable and exceptional an Application for Absence form must be completed prior to the absence and this can be obtained from the school office. Family holidays must be booked during the school holidays, these are published a year in advance. Absences due to holidays are not authorised. The Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absences. If the absence is unavoidable and exceptional a decision will be made with regard to the following:

- the child's record of attendance;
- the length of the absence requested
- the circumstances surrounding the request for absence
- the timing of the absence and ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any important examinations/assessments.

If the absence is not authorised and exceeds 20 days, the child's name will be removed from the school roll and reapplication for a place will need to be made.

Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Bell Farm school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from Bell Farm school roll until the following information has been received and confirmed:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school staff have not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Encouraging Attendance

Bell Farm School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- praising good attendance and punctuality;
- accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive to register after the close of the register, without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill;
- certificates are awarded to individual pupils each term with 100% attendance;
- presenting a trophy to the class with the best overall attendance each week;
- the attendance officer monitors pupils, informs parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranges meetings with them if necessary and refers the family to the Education Welfare Service if the issue continues;
- offers support and assistance, where possible.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- on the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 11am the school will endeavour to contact them promptly.

- if there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If by the end of the second day there has still been no contact made, the school should send a letter of concern to parents/carers or invite them into school to discuss their concerns. The school should tell parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS may result in further action, i.e. court prosecution.
- If a child's attendance falls below 85% by February we will seek advice from the EWS.

Penalty Notices

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013, state that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the "leave of absence" is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days/10 sessions or more within a three month period – this does not need to be consecutive) without authorisation of the school. Each parent will be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent.

Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

Penalty notices may also be considered appropriate if there is unauthorised absence or late arrival at school after the close of registration (currently 9:20am) on 7 occasions in any six week period (not including school closures). The liable parent/carer will receive a written warning from the Education Welfare Service of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

For School Staff only

School Organisation

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this there are the following specific responsibilities.

Headteacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- adopt the whole policy;
- initiate contact with parents in cases of unexplained absence and lateness before referring to the Education Welfare Service (EWS), (unless there is justifiable cause for concern when contact is required speedily, in which case immediate referral to the EWS may be necessary);
- ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow up work with the EWS;
- consult and liaise closely with the EWSD on a regular basis and take responsibility to ensure appropriate referrals are identified and instigated without delay;
- work in close collaboration with the EWS during their termly/half termly register analysis;
- organise attendance assemblies, awards etc;
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the EWS.
- follow up any unexplained non-attendance;
- follow up an unexplained lateness;

Class teachers to:

- positively encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily;
- record all reasons for absences in the register;
- record all reasons for lateness in the register;
- inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance/SLT of concerns;
- be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to SLT.

Status of Policy	Date
Authored by Valerie Blackwell	January 2011
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Agreed by Governors	January 2017
Review	Every 2 years (January 2019)