



Bevington Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

September 2019

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

School Attendance: Department for Education
October 2014

Bevington expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. At Bevington, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

1. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

2. Rights and responsibilities:

2.1 The Legal Framework:

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

2.2 Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with RBKC policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with RBKC policies and procedures.

2.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the RBKC Attendance Team and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used effectively and having the desired impact.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

2.4 Safeguarding Co-ordinator:

- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data from SIMS for DHT/SLT to analyse.
- To work with families with poor attendance and punctuality, putting measures in place to help improve this
- To liaise with and report to with outside agencies such as the School Nurse, RBKC Early Help and the RBKC Attendance Team.
- To organize termly meetings with outside agencies and parents of children with poor attendance and punctuality to put cross-agency measures in place to support attendance and punctuality.
- To maintain clear communication with the staff regarding attendance and punctuality within their classes.
- To support DSL with the promotion good attendance and punctuality, through organising incentives.
- To report any instances of home-education and children moving abroad to the Local Authority.

2.5 Administration Assistant:

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for classes.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the DHT/Safeguarding Co-ordinator, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To record reasons for absence on SIMS.
- To implement the daily checking of SIMS registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To maintain SIMS attendance records in line with this policy.
- To report attendance in the termly census, as requested.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- To keep parents informed of school procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.

2.6 Teachers and Classroom Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.

- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the SIMS register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's SIMS system at 9:10am and 1:20pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the DSL/Safeguarding Co-ordinator, of any attendance concerns.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

2.7 Parents:

If a child is absent from school for any reason parents should telephone the School Office as soon as possible to report the reason for this absence. If the child is arriving late at school for any reason, parents should let the office know, preferably the day before. Medical appointments should be confirmed with an appointment card or letter. If a child is absent for 5 or more school days then medical evidence is required. Parents should try to schedule appointments out of school hours if at all possible.

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

2.8 The Local Authority

The LA, through the Attendance Team and Early Help Team, is expected to:

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

3. Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:

We aim to ensure that good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school. We aim to do this in the following ways:

3.1 Weekly Celebration Assemblies

Celebration Assemblies are held every week on Friday. Classes with the highest attendance receive Attendance Cup.

3.2 Monthly School Newsletter

Each month, the school newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the school is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.

3.3 School Attendance Board

The board includes attendance information and the effect of poor attendance on educational outcomes. Details of how parents can support the school by improving their child's attendance and punctuality, is also included.

3.4 Breakfast Club Daily

The school offers a daily Breakfast Club. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 7:30am, ensuring they are on time for school.

3.5 The School Learning Environment

A welcoming, organised learning environment, that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT, to ensure this.

3.6 Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated. Staff themselves are also rewarded for their own good attendance.

3.7 End of Term Attendance Rewards

At the end of each term there is a special reward for the class with the best attendance through the term.

3.8 Sharing Attendance Data

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

3.9 Parents Evenings

This provides an opportunity for form teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to the DSL/Safeguarding-Coordinator.

3.10 Text Messages

Parents of children who arrive to school late (after 9.05am) are sent a text message, reminding them of the importance of arriving at school on time.

4. Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

4.1 Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using SIMS. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

4.2 Morning Register

Class registers remain open until 9:10am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register and click 'save' on SIMS. The teacher may submit the register as many times as they wish before 9.00 am (e.g. if a mistake has been made or a child has arrived slightly late) but at 9.00 am the register must be correct and submitted. From 9.00 am the school playground door is closed. Children arriving between 9:00am and 10:00 are recorded as 'L' (late before register closed) in the register. The office staff check that the children who have arrived late have been marked in the registers and correct any mistakes or inputs codes for children who are known to be absent. The School Office then begins first day absence calls. Children arriving after 10:00am are recorded as 'U' (late after register closed) in the register.

4.3 Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. They should be by 1:20pm

4.4 School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality. (Copies of all standard letter formats are included at the end of this document.)

4.5 Punctuality

Texts are sent daily to parents whose children arrive at school late (after 9.05am). The Administration Assistant, DSL and Safeguarding-Coordinator monitor punctuality regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly, or via a phone call. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent; explain how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents are invited in to school, to discuss the concerns with keys staff and plan a way forward. If lateness does not improve following the meeting, the HT will arrange to meet the parents. The family could then be referred to the RBKC Attendance Team who will contact parents warning them that further action may be taken.

IMPORTANT: Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

4.6 Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made.

The Office Staff follow this system:

- Phone parents' contact number(s).
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
- Speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.
- The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The Office Staff must establish a reason for every absence. If the Office Staff have not been able to contact parents after 2 days then the matter is treated as a safeguarding issue and must be referred immediately to the DSL.

4.7 Attendance Meetings

The DSL/Safeguarding Co-ordinator monitors individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 95% and parents who are concerned about their child's attendance, are invited to work in partnership with the school.

5. Exceptional Circumstances

In line with Tri-Borough Guidance, and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is authorised by the headteacher due to exceptional circumstances only. It is not a parental right to take leave during term time. Parents must make a request for leave during term time giving the exceptional circumstances for the request and it is at the headteacher's discretion to determine whether that request should be granted.

Examples of exceptional circumstances could include:

- Death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- Life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- Parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Any parent requiring an absence for their child, for an exceptional reason other than for the purpose of a holiday, should make their application in writing at least two weeks prior to the time they wish to have leave.

Please note, holidays during term time will not be authorised, and could result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

6. Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken by the Local Authority

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school.

- The amount of the penalty is £60.
- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to their attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996: "If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence." The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- 'Parent' includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.
- These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

Ownership and consultation	
Document sponsor (role)	Safeguarding Co-ordinator
Document author (name)	Tracey Simpson
Consultation	Karen Matthews, Headteacher Richard Byrne-Smith, Deputy Headteacher Shainey Slater, Designated Safeguarding Lead Hayley Murphy, Business Manager
Audience	
Audience	All school based staff and volunteers; Parents and carers
Version control	
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Related documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff Handbook All safeguarding related policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy ○ Keeping Children Safe in Education ○ Special Educational Needs Policy

Review of Policy and Procedures

Bevington carries out a three-yearly review of this Policy, led by the DSL. This includes an evaluation of the extent to which this policy has been effectively implemented throughout the school. The Governors will remedy any deficiencies or weaknesses in addressing issues without delay and without waiting for the next policy review date, should any be necessary.

APPENDIX 1 – Standard Letter to Parents

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance and Punctuality at Bevington Primary School

I am writing to remind you of the importance of regular and punctual attendance for all pupils and to seek your continued support in working with the school to minimise unnecessary absence.

Attendance

The target attendance level for Bevington Primary School, and for each individual pupil is **96%**. Pupils whose attendance falls **between 90% and 96%** will be contacted by the school to offer support and ensure that future attendance improves. Persistent absenteeism is considered to be when a pupil fails to attend school regularly over a six-week period and their **attendance has fallen below 90%**.

Punctuality

Pupils are considered to be late for school if they arrive after 9:00am. If they arrive after 10:00am the register is closed and this is an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Late attendance has an impact on your child's learning and on the smooth running of the class. Please ensure your child gets the most from their learning time by arriving to school on time, particularly as literacy and numeracy are the key subjects in the morning classes.

Exceptional leave

In September 2013 there was a change in the law with regard to children's absence from school. Schools are required to report any absence and this information is collected by the Local Authority. The Council are now far more likely to issue a penalty notice (PN) for absence. Please see the attached leaflet from the Tri Borough Authority on penalty notices which may be issued by the RBKC Attendance Team.

Parents must ask permission, where the situation is exceptional or urgent, for their child to be absent during term time. Guidance from RBKC states that PNs may be issued for the first period of unauthorised absence or when the family regularly take holidays during term time and their period of absence is a continuation of a trend.

If you have any questions please ask at the School Office.

Yours faithfully,



Karen Matthews

APPENDIX 2 – Follow-up Attendance Letter

Dear Parents' Name

Unauthorised Absence

I am writing to remind you of the importance of regular attendance for all pupils and to seek your continued support in working with the school to minimise pupil absence levels.

The target attendance level for Bevington Primary School, and for each individual pupil is **96%**.

Your child

A certificate of your child's attendance illustrating a period of unauthorised absence is attached. Please be aware that pupil absences from school for any reason other than illness, which have not been agreed by the Headteacher, are unauthorised and may result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Please note that a medical certificate is required for any medical absence at the start or end of a holiday period.

If you would like to meet with myself, or the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, to discuss this matter please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Designated Safeguarding Lead

APPENDIX 3 – Follow-up Punctuality Letter

Dear *Parents' Name*

SCHOOL PUNCTUALITY – *Child's Name*

Childs' name has arrived late to school on XXX occasions since the start of the academic year. A copy of the attendance report is attached for your information.

Please ensure that *Childs' name* punctuality improves in the next half term. If not, the school may have to make a referral to the RBKC Attendance Team.

Late attendance has an impact on your child's learning and on the smooth running of the class. Please cooperate with this request in the best interests of your child and the school as a whole.

If you have any question or wish to discuss the contents of this letter please let me know.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Designated Safeguarding Lead