



Beaufort Primary School

Attendance Policy



Introduction

Beaufort Primary school is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. We expect our children to attend 100% of school sessions. We recognise that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good progress depends on good attendance.

Beaufort School gives a high priority and value to attendance and punctuality and ensure that specific strategies are in place in order to achieve this. We recognise the crucial importance of early intervention and provide appropriate strategies and the link between attendance and safeguarding of children. The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

The law regulating the school day and school year applies only to schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority. This law does not apply to academies and Free Schools.

School's Role and Responsibilities

We aim to create an ethos and culture, which encourages and values good attendance. All staff (teaching and support) at Beaufort Primary School will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The school has a designated Attendance Officer who is responsible for all matters related to attendance, for reporting concerns to the Headteacher in a timely fashion and for liaising with the **Inclusion Officers (formerly the Education Welfare Officers - EWO)**. The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. As an academy, we will:

- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled, being open to all pupils for 368 sessions each school year (where possible);
- Accurately record and monitor attendance, absence and lateness, analysing and benchmarking attendance data for individuals and groups and reporting this to governors termly.
- Complete a register twice each day at 8.40am and **1.05pm**;
- Clearly distinguish between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised according to criteria laid down by the DfE (Department for Education);
- Submit Accurate attendance returns to the DfE within the stipulated time frame;
- ~~Set annual targets and submit these targets~~, along with attendance data, in accordance with the relevant regulations, including to school governors;

- ~~Remind parents about the importance of good school attendance, ensuring they receive regular (monthly) attendance information regarding their child in the form of a certificate or leaflet. This will tell them if their child's attendance is 100%. Parents can request their child's percentage figure for the year so far at any~~
- time.
- Provide parents with regular attendance information and guidance through induction meetings, newsletters, **termly 100% certificates**, letters and leaflets.
- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, acting early to address patterns of absence, working with families, pupils and the **Inclusion Officers** to support and promote good attendance for **all** pupils, including the most vulnerable, responding to issues which might lead to non-attendance. The school employs a family link worker who may support families where there is poor attendance.

Parents' Role and Responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring that children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child). Parents have a responsibility to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly, which at this school means 100% of school sessions.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Parents should:

- Have an expectation that their child will attend **100%** of the school sessions, unless physically unfit to do so.
- Make sure that the school is informed of the reason for any absence by telephone by 10am on the first day of absence and daily by email or telephone thereafter.
- Not take their child out of school for holidays or other time off during term time unless there are exceptional and unavoidable circumstances.
- Ensure that their child goes to bed at an appropriate time in order to be alert and rested for the following day;
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day, properly dressed, having had breakfast and with the right equipment for the day;
- Work in partnership with the school, taking an active and positive interest in their children's work and activities and attending parents' meetings and consultations, etc.;
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life or if they are concerned that their child may be reluctant to attend. The School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

Pupils' responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher. Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn.

Governors' responsibilities

The governors at Beaufort School monitor attendance closely and will contact any family where attendance has been identified as an issue. Failure to improve poor attendance may result in a referral to the Inclusion Officers.

Registration and Lateness

The School Attendance Officer will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training. The school office will record any child leaving or entering the school at times other than registration.

The registers will close ten minutes after the start of the school day and at **1.05** pm in the afternoon. Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Any child arriving late but before the closing of the register will be marked as late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late.

Lateness is registered in a separate book. If children arrive after the gate is closed, their parents must bring them to the office to sign them in and explain their lateness. Lateness is monitored and repeated lateness is referred to the Headteacher, who will contact parents to discuss the issue. Continued lateness will be referred to the **Inclusion Service** Team.

Safeguarding

Registers are checked daily and phone calls are made to homes where pupils have not arrived in school and where we have not received a phone call or message from home to explain the absence. Parents are encouraged to ring school or **email** by 10.00 a.m. on each day of absence. Phone calls home will be made before 10.30 a.m. each morning to ensure pupils are safe and being cared for. If there is no answer from the parents mobile or home contact numbers, the Attendance Officer will refer the child to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). Unauthorised absences are referred to the DSL weekly.

Authorised Absence

A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher. The school will accept the following as reasons for authorised absence:

- the child is too ill to attend. In cases of recurring absences through illness parents may be asked to produce a medical certificate;
- where the pupil has an **emergency** dental/medical appointment. (Routine appointments should be made after school or during the holidays) Parents should return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send them to school beforehand;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- other exceptional circumstances* recognised by the Headteacher as justifying absence and for a very limited period.

*The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) guidelines for exceptional circumstances are classed as “rare, significant or unavoidable” and if an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time, then it would not be normal to authorise absence.

Requests for absence during term time

Children are required to attend school for 184 days each year, thus leaving 181 days for other activities to take place. The school holiday dates are published well in advance and we therefore expect parents/carers to book family holidays and other events during school holidays. **Term-time holidays will not be authorised at Beaufort School.**

The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional. **We class ‘exceptional circumstances’ as an event, which cannot reasonably have been predicted or foreseen.** Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. **Leave of absence for a family wedding in the UK or abroad and the amount of days approved is at the discretion of the Headteacher.** An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to the **Inclusion Service Team.**

If an absence in term time is **unavoidable**, parents should complete a request for leave of absence well in advance, giving full details, and submit this to the Headteacher, explaining reasons for the absence. However, time off school is not a right and any decision to authorise absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher, who may wish to discuss the proposed absence with parents.

In line with the guidance from the DfE, leave of absence during SATs, and other external exam periods will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Absences for important Religious Observances

The School will authorise 1 day to attend a formal religious ceremony, such as EID, seeking advice from religious bodies within the community.

Parents wishing to take a day of absence for religious observance should complete a request for leave of absence well **in advance** of the event and submit this to the Headteacher.

Policy on Prosecution

The school ensures that reasonable steps are taken by the school before a referral is made to the **Inclusion Officers.** However, **any unauthorised absence of 5 or more days, which do not have to be consecutive may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.** Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council’s Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

If a pupil who is registered at a school fails to attend that school regularly and attempts by the **Inclusion Officers** and the school fail to ensure that the pupil returns to regular attendance the **Inclusion Officers**, on behalf of the County Council, will, unless there are mitigating circumstances, consider taking legal action by issuing a summons against the parents to appear before the magistrates court under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 **Inclusion Officers** have the power to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to the parents of a child who fails to attend school regularly. (**Inclusion Officers** may also issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to the parents of an excluded child who is found in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion). Fixed Penalty Notices may only be issued in accordance with the terms of a local Code of Conduct. (Copies of this Code of Conduct are available from the **Inclusion Service Team**.)

If a parent chooses to take their child out of school for a period exceeding 20 school days without the permission of the Head Teacher, the child will be removed from the school roll unless evidence of sickness or unavoidable cause explaining such absence is provided to the school. If a child is removed from roll, upon their return parents would have to reapply for a place at the same or another school. Due to the demand for school places there is no guarantee that there will be a vacancy at the school of their choice.

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year with its allocated **Inclusion Officer**.

Policy Written: May 2017

Reviewed by the Local Governing Committee at its meeting in Autumn 2023

Review Date: Autumn 2026