

Introduction

Attendance and punctuality is crucial to children's learning and achievement at school. When a child is absent from school they miss a great deal which affects their subsequent learning, well-being and achievement. If pupils are not at school they miss out both academically and socially. Pupils who attend late or are absent have great difficulty catching up with learning. They also develop habits which can affect their life chances. Furthermore, pupil who are late or absent can cause disruptions to the education and learning of pupils who are regular and punctual.

Bigland Green wants to ensure that all its pupils achieve their full potential. To achieve this the school needs parental support and co-operation. If pupils are not at school they cannot be taught. Parents are requested to help the school achieve the best possible standards in attendance and punctuality by following the procedures in this policy.

The school should be provided with reasons for all absences. The school will decide if the absence can be authorised or would it be categorised as unauthorised in accordance with national and local guidance. Below are some examples of authorised and unauthorised absences (the list is not exhaustive):

Examples of authorised absences

- Sickness
- Bereavement in the family
- Emergency medical appointments
- Hospital appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours

Examples of unauthorised absences

- Not 'feeling well...'
- Visiting family members
- Shopping
- Looking after younger siblings
- Might get ill – weather is cold

Pupils should not have any un-authorised absences as it will result in the issuing of fixed penalty notices by the Local Authority to both parents. For more information about fixed penalty notices please visit <http://www.biglandgreen.towerhamlets.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Penalty-Notices.pdf>

This link <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview> will provide more information about the laws surrounding school attendance.

Authorised absences should be kept to a minimum. Pupils with attendance which is below 90% are categorised as 'persistent absence' by the Department for Education. Pupils who are on the persistent absence list are reported to the national and local government through the school census each half-term.

Applications for leave during term time should be discussed with the school at the earliest opportunity – please see the school’s policy for ‘Leave during term time’ for further information.

School Rules

1. Unless your child is really ill or has a medical appointment that cannot be made after school, they must be in school.
2. Pupils must not be kept at home because they are ‘not feeling well’ or the ‘weather is bad’.
3. Pupils should not miss school frequently for minor illnesses, such as headache, cold or cough. It is important that parents seek medical advice on such cases as a matter of urgency.
4. Pupils must not miss school to go shopping, to look after younger brother or sister or to visit relatives.
5. The school gates are opened from 8:45 AM. Pupils should be in their class at 9:00 AM. Pupils are marked as later after 9:02 AM.

Duties of...	Parents and carers	School and teachers
When the child is late	Take the child to the school office and explain the reason for being late. Be patient as it may take a few minutes to collect late pupils.	Record the reason for lateness in the register. The attendance officer to talk to parents who are persistently late. Support to be sought from parental involvement officer where necessary.
On the first day of absence	Telephone the school on 020 7702 7088 and notify the reason for the absence.	Telephone home by second day of absence to find out the reason. Arrange home visit depending on circumstances.
When the child returns to school	Provide the classteacher with a written note explaining the exact reason for the absence.	Provide proforma for a written note. Ensure a note is obtained and placed in the register.
If the absence is for more than 3 consecutive days	Inform the school in writing and provide a medical certificate if requested.	Attendance officer to meet with the parents and if necessary discuss and agree an action plan.

Further information about the school’s actions to deal with attendance and punctuality are detailed below in appendix A.

Date agreed	Signature	Review Date
May 2018		May 2020

Agreed actions for Attendance and punctuality

Appendix A



These procedures are based on the guidance contained in Keeping children safe in education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges, DfE¹, September 2016; and Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities, DfE, September 2016

Actions for attendance

Incident	Actions to be taken by parents/carers	Actions to be taken by the school
Day 1: Child is absent	Notify classteacher or school office of reason for absence and predict date of return.	No Action. (classteacher / school office to inform Attendance Officer of all messages received).
Day 1: Child is absent	(If no notification is received from parents/guardian).	Attendance Officer to telephone parents for reason and date of return.
Day 2: Child is absent without reason	(If no notification is received from parents/guardian).	Attendance Officer to make a second attempt to telephone parents/carers.
Day 3: Child is absent	(If no notification is received from parents/guardian).	Attendance Officer to inform Headteacher and organise for a home visit; contact schools of known siblings; inform the Local Authority; consider a concern for missing children.
Child returns after absence	Provide letter of explanation or complete the absence slip and give this to the classteacher.	Teacher collects the slip and puts it in the register. Parents to complete school absence slip if parents do not provide a note.
Child returns after 5 or more consecutive days absence	Attend meeting at the school to discuss absence and if necessary to draw up an action plan.	Attendance Officer meets parents to discuss absence and draw up an action plan as necessary. The team leader or headteacher is involved when necessary.
Child's attendance below 91%		School sends Attendance Letter 1: Informs parents of the number of absences and invites parents to work with the school to improve their child's school attendance.
Child's attendance below 85%		School sends Attendance Letter 2: invitation to parents to attend a review meeting at the school to discuss the absence and draw up an action plan.
No response/ no improvement in absence rate	Attend meeting with the team leader or the headteacher to avoid court action.	School sends Attendance Letter 3 and refers the matter to the Local Authority for action.
Absence continues to be a problem		Court action – Local Authority to issue fixed penalty notice as deemed necessary and take the necessary legal actions.

¹ DfE = Department for Education; General information <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

Actions for punctuality

Incident	Actions to be taken by parents/carers	Actions to be taken by the school
Child is late for school	<p>9.01 Take children to the class room door and explain reason for lateness to teacher.</p> <p>9.02 Children enter school through main school reception door and explain reason for lateness in the office.</p> <p>Kindly be patient as it may take to a few minutes for a staff member to collect the late children.</p>	<p>8:45 to 9:00 Gates for playground opened for parents and their children.</p> <p>8.58 - 9.01 Classroom doors open – children settle in class quickly and start learning.</p> <p>Pupils arriving after 9:02 AM are marked as late in the registers.</p> <p>9.05 School gates are closed.</p>
Late on a particular day on more than 5 occasions	Parents attend meeting at the school to discuss their child's lateness.	<p>Attendance Officer to monitor lateness rate. Send Punctuality Letter 1 informing the parents of the number of absences and invitation to a meeting to discuss their child's lateness.</p> <p>If parent do not attend then referred to Parental Involvement Officer.</p>
Number of lateness continues to increase	Parents attend meeting at the school to review the action plan and discuss other possible support.	School involves parental involvement officer and/or the learning mentor to provide necessary support.
Lateness increases to 10 occasions or no response to first letter	Parents attend meeting at the school to discuss and agree an action plan.	<p>Attendance Officer sends Punctuality Letter 2 warning of a referral to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice.</p> <p>Attendance Officer refers the case to the Parental Involvement Officer.</p>
No response/ increase in number of lateness to 15 or more		Attendance Officer makes a referral to the Local Authority for fixed penalty notice and sends Punctuality Letter 3 to the parents informing them of the actions taken.
No compliance with agreed action plan		Referral to the Local Authority (social inclusion panel) requesting court proceedings.