



Brady Primary School

Attendance Policy





Aims of Brady Primary School



At Brady Primary School we aim to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment, which offers opportunities:-

- For everyone within the school to reach their full potential and develop self-worth, self-confidence, the ability to take responsibility for their own individual actions, and resilience.
- For everyone within the school to have a sense of wonder, an enthusiasm for learning and help children to develop as independent thinkers and learners with enquiring minds.
- To encourage and develop a respect and understanding for others.
- To develop all partnerships, small and large, from the individual parent to the wider community and beyond to support children's learning.
- To give children access to a broad and balanced creative curriculum to attain the highest possible standards in relation to prior attainment through assessment, teaching and learning.

Equal opportunities and Inclusion

At Brady Primary school we believe that every child is entitled to equal access to the curriculum, regardless of race, gender, class or disability.

We are committed to promoting learning and teaching environments, for all that embed the values of inclusive educational practices.

Through a child centered approach, we aim to ensure that education is accessible and relevant to all our learners, to respect each other and to celebrate diversity and difference.



Rationale

(For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.)

1 INTRODUCTION.

1.1 The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age (between 5 years old and 16 years old) registered at a school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence and punishable in law. In the event of regular unauthorised absences, a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Education Welfare Service

1.2 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from attending school.

1.3 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required. These records are required to be reported to the Local Authority at agreed intervals and can form evidence in court where parents are being prosecuted for school attendance offences and include details of pupils who:

- fail to attend regularly,
- are identified as having unsatisfactory attendance during a formal register review (less than 90%),
- have been absent for a continuous period of ten or more school days,
- fail to arrive on time for school or are collected late on a regular basis.

What does the law say?

By law, all children between the age of 5 and 16 must receive full time education, from the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday and to the last Friday in June of the academic year in which he/she turns 16 years old. During this time your child must strive to remain above the school attendance target (around 95-97%) and attend school as regularly as possible. If your child's attendance falls below 90% they are deemed in law as a 'persistent absentee' and your details will be passed onto the Education Welfare Service. It is the school who must give permission for your child to be absent, not the parents. If your child does not attend school regularly your details will be passed onto the Education Welfare Service and legal action (under The Education Act 1996 - Section S7 444 (1) and 444 (1A)) may be taken.



Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 States:

“The parent/s of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- a) to his age ability and aptitude and***
- b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”***

If found guilty of your child not attending school on a regular basis the penalty can be a fine of up to £2,500.00 and/or a custodial sentence of up to three months. If a parent is being prosecuted under Section 444 (1A) defendants are required to attend court as a custodial sentence may be imposed, if they fail to do so a warrant may be issued.

2 DEFINITIONS.

2.1 Authorised absence.

- Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, illness, medical/dental appointments (for which an appointment letter or card will need to be produced), religious observance (one day only) and bereavement. Medical certificates may be requested for absences of 5 days or more, long-term or repeated patterns of non-attendance due to illness and when a student is absent prior or does not return after a school holiday (Half terms, Christmas, Easter or the summer holidays).
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.

2.2 Unauthorised absence.

- Unauthorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school without good reason and for which no Leave of Absence has been sought or granted. This includes:
 - keeping children off for treats,
 - truancy,
 - absences which have never been properly explained,
 - children who arrive late after registration has closed without a good reason.

3 PROCEDURES.

3.1 Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as authorised or unauthorised. Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. All absences, unless requested by letter or appointment card previous, are recorded as unauthorised and will be changed once your child returns and the school receives either a letter of explanation regarding the absence or a copy of the hospital/doctors/dentist appointment card/letter.



3.2 Lateness.

We lay a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day but it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instruction and teaching. It is important to note that persistent lateness constitutes irregular school attendance in law.

Morning registration will take place at the start of the school day at 8.45am and your child should arrive 5-10 minutes before this time. Pupils arriving after 8.45am will be marked as 'L' (late before registers have closed). The registers will then remain open for 30 minutes (closing at 9.15am). Any pupil arriving after 9.15am and 1.30pm in the afternoon, will lose their mark and will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence - late after registers have closed). In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment and the appointment card/letter has been seen prior to the appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered once the pupil arrives.

If frequent lateness is recorded then a letter will be sent to the parents by the school and if no improvement is made then the EWO will be informed to intervene and contact parents directly.

It is important to note that persistent lateness constitutes irregular school attendance in law.

Below is a graph showing how arriving late to school every day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



3.3 Reporting Absences - First Day Absence.

Parents are asked to contact the office on the first day of a child's absence. A message can be left on the answer phone stating the child's name, year group and briefly the reason for the absence. This should be before 9.30 a.m. A note explaining the absence is then placed in the class register. (If your child is ill due to sickness and/or diarrhoea they must not return to school for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness/diarrhoea). You can also report your child's absence via the school website.

3.4 When a child returns, he/she must provide a letter of explanation signed and dated by the parent. Absences cannot be authorised unless this procedure is followed. (Providing a written letter of explanation may not be sufficient for an authorised absence if the reason given is not valid).

(Please note - because it is not possible to be certain of the originator of an e-mail message the school is unable to accept an e-mail as parental authorisation of a pupil absence).



Absence notes received from parents should be kept for the remainder of the academic year or longer if there are attendance concerns about a pupil. These notes may be submitted to the EWO if the officer is involved in the attendance issues for the particular child in question.

3.5 Medical or Dental Appointments.

Routine appointments should ideally be made out of school hours. A note or copy of the appointment card/letter must, where possible, must be sent to the school office in advance of the appointment. Where advanced notice is not possible then a copy of the appointment card/letter must be produced on your child's return for the absence to be authorised.

3.6 Unexplained Absence.

If the school has any cause for concern about a pupil who is absent without adequate explanation a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. This action does not preclude the school taking all the necessary steps to ensure that the child/ren is/are safe. Details of any of the action taken by the school will be submitted to the Education Welfare Officer/Service in order that they are fully equipped with the necessary information. Unexplained absences and/or frequent absences can be a serious cause for concern and will therefore, in terms of the Safeguarding of Children and Young People, will be a priority for this school.

3.7 Frequent Absence.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher and attendance officer to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents. If this is unsuccessful the school will usually refer the matter to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO). A range of professional staff may need to be alerted to the attendance concerns for a particular child, i.e. a child that has a statement of special needs.

3.8 Long-term absence.

Depending on the nature of the illness material will be sent home enabling the child to keep up to date with school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

3.9 Persistent Absence.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year for whatever reason. In cases of persistent absence or patterns of absence, the school will request evidence of attendance at the GP, via the Borough Attendance Officer.



Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	2 Weeks	54 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	4 Weeks	114 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	6 Weeks	174 Lessons
80%	38 Days	72 Sessions	8 Weeks	228 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	10 Weeks	288 Lessons
70%	57 Days	114 Sessions	11.5 Weeks	342 Lessons
65%	67 Days	134 Sessions	13.5 Weeks	402 Lessons

4. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

4.1 Every child of school age is legally obliged to attend school for 190 days per year, on the days designated by the school. Therefore, the policy of this school is to discourage parents from taking children out of school during term time. Parents should be aware that it will be difficult to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum if a child has prolonged absences from school. All pupils' progress is tracked and linked to attendance; and poor progress can often be linked to poor attendance.

Leave of Absence CANNOT be authorised retrospectively, except in case of family trauma/bereavement. Any absence granted is only for the days agreed; a child who is absent because, for example, they are tired following a late performance from the night before or holiday flights were delayed will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence.

4.2 Leave of Absence for Family Holidays.

The Local Authority expects Headteachers NOT to authorise requests for family holidays and leave of absence in term time. The rationale for this explanation is that:

“Absence during term time is potentially detrimental to the education of children and young people. Leave of absence is NOT an entitlement.”

If the circumstances of a parental request are SO exceptional that the Headteacher determines that the request be allowed, the parent will be required to give an expected return date. Exceptional circumstances are rare and will be determined at the discretion of the Headteacher. A “Request for Authorisation for Leave



of Absence During Term Time” form should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the proposed holiday date.

‘If the absence is not authorised and leave is taken, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. Please note as from the 1st September 2024 fixed penalty notices are changing, below are details of these new charges but please refer to the letter at the end of this policy for further details.

Fixed penalty fines effective 01 September 2024 will be issued per parent per child.

- 1st Offence - £80 fine** – will be issued and would need to be paid within 21 days. If payment not received within 21 days, the fine will increase to £160 and must be paid within 7 days. Failure to pay the fine of £160 will result in prosecution in the magistrates’ court.
- 2nd Offence within 3 years** - £160 fine – will be issued and would need to be paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the fine of £160 within 21 days will result in prosecution in the magistrates’ court.
- 3rd Offence within 3 years** - Where a family is identified to be fined on a 3rd occasion within a 3-year period, these cases will be referred straight to the magistrates’ court for prosecution.

4.3 Religious Observance.

Absence for religious observance, if for only one day, must be confirmed in writing by the Parent. Absence will then be recorded as authorised. If an absence for Religious Observance is any longer then a leave of absence form must be completed.

4.4 Stage/television Productions.

Parents should find out how many school days absence (or half days) they wish to request. This should include rehearsals, performance and traveling time.

Applications should be made in writing requesting absence as early as possible.

If the school deems that a child’s attainment and progress will suffer as a result of the absence, the request will be refused.

If permission is granted a letter will be given to the parents authorising the absence. Parents will then need to apply to the borough for a performing licence and a copy of the licence must be given the school before the absence begins. Where permission is granted, the absence will be recorded as authorised.

5. REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE.

5.1 At the end of each week the class with the highest attendance are rewarded with an announcement in the Friday morning assembly and enjoy a week with the attendance trophy. Children that obtain 100% attendance are, every term (December, April and July) announced in a special assembly and then given a special group treat (e.g. film treat with popcorn/sweets). Children that obtain 100% attendance in a whole school year are given a gift voucher and certificate



6. ATTENDANCE TARGETS.

6.1 The school, jointly, with the LA will set attendance targets each year. These targets will be based upon previous year’s data on attendance and will always be aspirational.

6.2 The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW.

7.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request regular reports from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

7.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records for a period of seven years.

7.3 The LA have a duty to regularly check the school’s registers for accuracy and to check that the correct codes are used for recording absences and approved educational activities.

The register reviews are undertaken by the school’s EWO as part of their role in improving attendance and this school will ensure that the registers are available upon request for this audit. The information provided by the register review will inform the school of any issues that need addressing.

Any concerns with the registers will be discussed with the school by the EWO.

7.4 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary. Brady Primary School is a successful school and the children are the centre of our focus. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time every day the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

Section 7 of the School Education Act 1996 requires all parents/carers of a child of compulsory school age who are registered at a school to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so is an offence. Neglect of this responsibility can result in the prosecution of parents/carers, with a penalty fine.

Chair of Governors Date



Headteacher Date

June 2024

Dear Parent / Guardians,

Changes to Penalty Fines for Unauthorised Absence

I hope this message finds you well.

We are writing to inform you of recent changes made by the government regarding penalty fines for unauthorised absence / non-attendance in schools, and to emphasise the crucial importance of regular school attendance for your child's academic success, overall development and wellbeing.

The government has taken a proactive step to reinforce the significance of consistent attendance, by implementing stricter and higher penalties as part of their commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students during their educational journey.

Academic Progress

Regular attendance allows students to keep up with their lessons, participate in discussions, and complete assignments on time which is essential for their academic progress and success.

Social and Emotional Development

Schools provide structured environments where students learn social skills, build friendships, develop emotional resilience, all of which are crucial for their overall development.

Prepare for the Future

Regular attendance creates habits of responsibility and discipline that are invaluable as student's transition into higher education or the workforce.

Legal Obligations

Parents/Guardians have a legal obligation to ensure their child/ children attends school regularly and arrives on time for their lessons. All Schools must follow the National Guidance in regards to unauthorised absences. We understand that various factors may occasionally impact your child's ability to attend school, such as illness or family emergencies and in such cases please communicate with your child's school promptly to allow for them to provide appropriate support and guidance.

Please see over for new regulations and charges.



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Cross Borough Checks

In cases where your child has moved between local authority areas the authority for that area will be contacted to check whether a penalty notice / prosecution has been actioned.

Co-parenting

A penalty notice can be issued to each parent or guardian liable for the attendance offence. This means if a child is residing with a parent and is taken on unauthorised leave with another parent or guardian, both would be issued with a penalty notice fine regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence.

National Threshold

If the local authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate in an individual case, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.

We encourage you to partner with us in fostering a positive attitude towards education and reinforcing the value of regular attendance with your child. Together, we can create an environment where every student has an opportunity to thrive academically and personally.

Should you have any questions or concerns around attendance please speak with your child's school attendance officer.

Yours Sincerely,
Mr Trevor Cook
Assistant Director Education Services – London Borough of Havering