



Banstead Infant School ATTENDANCE POLICY

Commitment to Attendance

The staff of Banstead Infant School are committed, in partnership with GLF Schools, parents/carers, children, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community. Research shows that good school attendance impacts upon children's learning, helps them to achieve and gives them a chance of a better future. Being in school helps to develop positive social skills in your child which in turn helps them to keep and make friends. Each day fills them with fantastic learning opportunities which will enrich and fulfil their lives. The expectation of the governors and staff at this school is that children will be in school 100% of the time. Absence will only be authorised if a child is unwell, an unavoidable medical appointment prevents them attending or if a leave of absence has been granted due to exceptional circumstances or religious observance. As a school, we will encourage parents to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

All parents will:

- encourage regular school attendance
- be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually
- ensure that their child arrives prepared for the school day
- ensure that they contact the school by 9.30 on the **first day** of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school
- notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child

The school will:

- publish the school holiday dates and INSET days in the **Spring Term for the following year**
- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- provide a safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to any parent's concerns
- keep regular and accurate records of morning and afternoon attendance and punctuality
- monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents by 10.00 on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the Head Teacher can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- investigate the circumstances when a child has frequent absences from school
- refer any child currently with a child protection plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation for **more than two days** to their key worker's Social Care Team
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition such as 'Attendance Awards,'

- award an attendance bear to the class with the highest average attendance for each term, followed by a silver and bronze certificate for the second and third highest. Children who have 100% attendance will be recognised during the assembly
- award children who have an attendance of 100% across the whole year or 3 years with a certificate in the last assembly of the summer term
- make initial enquiries regarding children who are not attending regularly
- meet regularly with the **Inclusion Officer** to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the **Inclusion Officer**

Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the Inclusion Officer may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice and fine, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

Children Leaving During the School Day

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time.
- When a child is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office and note in the appointment book the name, child's class, time in and out and the reason for the appointment before the child is allowed to leave the site.

Punctuality /Lateness

- It is paramount that all children arrive at school on time. Punctuality is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with a child's class is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class.
- Registration takes place at 9.00am and registers are taken by 9.05am.
- Children who arrive after the register has been taken will be recorded as late (L) to school. Registers close at 9.15am and after this, lateness is recorded as late after registers close (U).
- After 9.05 parents have to bring their child through the front door and report to the office if they are late. They also have to fill in a 'Late Book', explaining the reason for the lateness. If a child has more than 3 late entries in a month a letter is sent home to the parents to remind them about the importance of punctuality.
- Persistent lateness by a child will be dealt with through letter/phone call to parents and may be referred to the **Inclusion Officer**.

Keeping the Register of Attendance

- At the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions the electronic registers are marked by class teachers. Any child who is noted as absent has an 'N' marked after their name. The registers are then sent to the school office and the school office staff will mark the absence with the appropriate code, if the reason for absence is known at the time. The codes are available from the school office.
- The Head Teacher examines the school attendance record regularly and notes any unusual absences. He will then follow this up individually with the family concerned and, if necessary, seek advice from the Inclusion Officer.

Following up unexplained or unusual absences

- In the event of an explanation for absence not being received by 9.30am the office staff will contact the family concerned to find out what has happened. Most unexplained absences can be resolved in this way. On rare occasions where the absence remains unexplained, or where the explanation is considered, by the Head teacher, to be unsatisfactory, the absence will be recorded as being unauthorised.
- If a pattern of unusual absence begins to emerge, the class teacher and/or the Head teacher will speak to the family concerned to discover more directly the reasons behind it. Help can be offered, e.g. where a family has difficulty arriving on time due to a short-term change in family circumstances it can be suggested that the family approach other parents to bring the child to school, in the short term. Again, usually the situation can be resolved by both the school and the family working together, but it remains important that the family are reminded of the need for regular attendance. In appropriate cases the role of the **Inclusion Officer** will be highlighted with the family. In the case of repeated or long term unexplained absences, the **Inclusion Officer** will be asked to take further action, but only after the school have taken verbal and written action.
- **The Inclusion Officer** visits the school on a termly basis to examine the registers. Any children who are persistently absent or whose absence rates are particularly high (above 10%) will be discussed with the Head teacher and advice given.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform the school as soon as possible. A child will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the child will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The child's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Education Welfare. If a child is removed from the school to be home schooled the school will inform the appropriate officer at Surrey County Council and the Council responsible for the child's home address where necessary.

Procedures for Absences other than Holidays

- Parents/carers are asked to notify the school on the first day of any absence, stating the reason. This may be by telephone call, email, the PMX system or letter. On receipt of the reason for absence the appropriate symbol is placed in the child's attendance record.
- For planned absences, e.g. doctor's appointment, parents/carers are asked to notify school prior to the date and the register is marked with the appropriate code. If a parent wishes to remove a child from school during the day, e.g. for a medical appointment, parents must complete the signing in and out book as appropriate. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Absences will be authorised for the purpose of religious observance. The authorisation of absence will be for days exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Written proof may be requested from the religious body to which the parent belongs that the days requested are exclusively set apart for religious observance.

Leave of absence

It is expected that families will take their main holidays in the school holidays. If families are planning to remove their child from class for any reason other than illness or a medical appointment the parent/carer must set out their reasons in a letter or an email. It is very unusual for permission for leave of absence in term time to be given, this only occurs in EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. Once a letter or email is received, parents/ carers will receive written notification as to whether the request will be authorised. If the request is unauthorised and the child is taken out of school, the absence will be recorded with a G (unauthorised holiday absence).

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

The October 2014 National Association of Head Teacher's (NAHT) guidance defines exceptional circumstances as: rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 'Unavoidable' means an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence. Absence during term time for holidays is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance.

If a holiday is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the **Inclusion Officer** will be notified.

Penalty Notice

The **Inclusion** 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 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. *This money goes directly to Surrey County Council and does not benefit the school in any way.*

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.

Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued

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

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

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. Parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or **Inclusion Officer** 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.

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 per parent per child 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.

This policy also links to our policies on:
Safeguarding and Child Protection
Teaching and Learning
PSHE
Administration of Medicines Policy