



Including local arrangements in annexes for:

BIRCH HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Initial approval:	September 2015
Review frequency:	Annually
Date(s) reviewed:	November 2015, June 2016, May 2017, May 2018, May 2019, May 2020, October 2021, February 2022, February 2023

Contents

Expectations Regarding Attendance	3
ANNEX 1: SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS	8
ANNEX 2: FIRST DAY CALLING	9
ANNEX 3: REDUCING PERSISTENT ABSENCE	12
ANNEX 4: PROCEDURES FOR POTENTIAL CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION	14
ANNEX 4: ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES – BHPS	15

Expectations Regarding Attendance

Regular attendance and good punctuality are crucial factors for pupils/students to achieve their full potential at school. Pupils/students attend school for 190 days each year. The Trust expects as close to 100% attendance as possible for all pupils/students.

Parents have a legal obligation to ensure that their children attend school regularly but also a role in encouraging their children to see the value of education.

School registers are taken each morning and afternoon. Pupil/pupils/students arriving late but within 30 minutes of registration will be marked as Late. After this point an absence will be recorded which requires a parental explanation. Unexplained lateness will be deemed as Unauthorised Absence.

Legislation and guidance underpinning this policy

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Attendance Register

The Trust is required by law to maintain an attendance register. The attendance register must be taken at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session.

If a pupil/student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Each pupil/student must be recorded as:

- Present;
- Attend an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The absence of a pupil/student to take part in a supervised educational activity outside the School but authorised by the School is recorded as an "approved educational activity" and is regarded as "present".

The School will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason for the absence, establish whether the absence is approved or not, and identify the correct attendance code for the register.

Lesson Registers - Secondary Schools Only

In addition to morning and afternoon registrations, we take an electronic register during each lesson. Where a student is absent from a lesson, and there is no recorded reason for that absence, the teacher will raise an alert and a member of staff will verify the student has not signed out or gone to another area of the School. If the pupil/student cannot be found on site after a reasonable search, then parents will be contacted and police advised if the child's whereabouts remain unknown. Where a child has identified vulnerabilities and/or special educational needs, then the School may decide to call parents immediately. Similarly, the School may take the decision to contact the police directly if there is a risk of significant harm to the pupil/student.

Modified Timetables

In some situations (usually to support a pupil/student who is or has been unwell) a pupil/student may be put on a Modified (part-time) Timetable. This will happen as part of a formal process with a signed agreement. The Modified Timetable will be reviewed regularly and will be time limited. Where pupil/pupils/students are on agreed modified timetable, the School has agreed to the pupil/student being absent for part of the week or day and therefore will record it as authorised absence.

Illness

Parents are expected to notify the School before 8:45am on each day that their child will be absent due to illness. Where a pupil/student does not register for a morning session and there is no explanation for their absence, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents to inform them of this. The first day calling procedures are contained in Annex 1.

If an email or telephone message has been received, the parents are not required to send a further acknowledgement in writing, however the School reserves the right to ask for confirmation in writing at any time. Whilst the parent may provide a reason for an absence, decisions as to whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised will be made by the School.

Emails may be sent to the School's Attendance email or Absence phone line as long as they are received from an email address which has previously been registered with the School on its database.

When a child is unwell and absent over a short period (less than a week), the School will assume that they are not well enough to complete work. In this event, teachers will not normally provide work for children to complete but will support them to catch up on their return.

When a child is absent over a longer period due to an illness which is supported by a medical note the School will work with child and their family to arrange work for them as appropriate.

Pupils/students falling ill during the school day

When a child appears to be too physically or emotionally/mentally unwell to be in school we will ask that they be collected by a parent in order to be either taken home or to seek medical attention.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Medical or dental appointments should, in all cases, be made after the school day has ended, except in an emergency.

Requests for Leave of Absence during Term Time

From 1 September 2013, the regulations governing the granting of leaves of absence to pupils/students in term time changed. Leaves of absence can now only be granted in "exceptional circumstances".

For the avoidance of doubt, going on holiday during term time does not constitute exceptional circumstances, and a leave of absence during term time will not be granted to parents for this reason unless there is some other "exceptional reason" for doing so (for example, the holiday is to visit a terminally ill relative who lives in another country). The School may, in some circumstances, grant a leave of absence to attend a funeral or wedding of a close relative, namely a parent, sibling and, in cases where there was regular contact, grandparents.

Parents should submit requests for a leave of absence to the school office **at least 15 days** before the first date of the proposed absence. Such requests must be in writing and outlined **in detail** the reason for the request for leave of absence, the number of days that the pupil/student would be absent, and any consequences should the leave of absence not be granted.

Parents should not assume that a request for leave of absence will be granted, and no arrangements (for example, travel tickets or accommodation) should be booked before the request has been considered and authorised. The School will not accept any responsibility for any losses incurred in consequence of the

refusal of a request.

Absence of a pupil/student will never be authorised retrospectively, and any such absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If a request for leave of absence is refused and the pupil/student is subsequently absent on any of the days that the request related to, the School will notify the local authority, which is likely to result in the issue of a penalty notice to each parent for each day of the absence for each child. This is also the case if a request is authorised, but the pupil/student is absent for longer than agreed.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Under certain circumstances the School might refer parents to the Local Authority with the recommendation that a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice) be issued. For example:

- Taking unauthorised holiday (or other leave) during term-time
- Repeated absence or lateness which is not explained in writing by a medical professional
- A long absence which is not explained in writing by a medical professional

In this event, each parent would be fined for each affected child.

Absence for Religious Observance

A request for leave of absence to take part in a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong will be agreed by the School. A request for such absence should be made in writing **at least 15 days** in advance. Typically, the Trust will grant a leave of absence of one day per annum for religious observance. The Trust may seek advice from the religious body before agreeing the request.

Long-Term Absence

Where a pupil/ /student is absent from school without authorisation for a length of time (including long visits overseas) the School may consult with the Local Authority Attendance Officer. This may result in a referral to social care, prosecution, or, in the event that the absence is 20 consecutive school days or more, the child's removal from the school roll.

Pupils/students going off roll and preventing Children Missing in Education

Children Missing in Education (CME) are children whose whereabouts are known but for whom there is no educational provision in place and children whose whereabouts and educational provision are unknown.

The School's Attendance Officer monitors attendance on a day to day basis and refers the names of individual pupils/students who may require additional support.

Where members of staff are concerned that an absence or pattern of absence raises a safeguarding concern (including possible links to forced marriage or female genital mutilation), they will consult with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Local Authority will be informed when the School is **about to** remove a pupil/student's name from the admission register.

Where a pupil/student is absent without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days the pupil/student can be removed having made reasonable enquiries in conjunction with the Local Authority re the whereabouts of the child.

Where a parent has notified the School of their intention to remove their child from the school roll in order to Electively Home Educate (EHE) them, the school will inform the Local Authority.

Attendance pupil/student support strategies

Pupils/students whose attendance is not considered satisfactory will need positive reinforcement on their return to school, and the Inclusion Team and/or Pastoral Team will seek to provide support by working with pupils/students and their parents to encourage a more positive attitude towards attendance.

Our Family Support Advisor (FSA) and SENDCo have positive roles in assisting those who are potential school refusers. Non-attendance will usually be addressed by the Attendance Officer in the first instance but will be escalated to a member of the a Senior Leader Team (SLT) and/or the Local Authority Attendance Officer if there is no improvement. The Safeguarding Lead, the SENCO or Headteacher may also be included.

Pupils/students who miss school through accident, injury or ill health often worry about the work being missed and about travelling around the busy school site on their return. The FSA can co-ordinate work to be carried out at home (if the absence period is going to be longer than a week) and offer support to the pupil/student on their return. These members of staff will also be in close contact with the Local Authority Attendance Officer and other outside medical and support agencies, as necessary. A Modified Timetable may be instigated.

Where pupils'/students' attendance is at risk of falling below 93%, the actions outlined in Annex 2 are followed.

A pupil/student's attendance record may be taken into account when allocating places on a school trip, visit or activity.

Support for Parents

Parents will be kept fully informed about their child's behaviour, attendance and punctuality. The School will seek to work in partnership with parents in order to improve behaviour through, for example, meetings, pastoral support plans, etc.

The School will encourage parents to make use of outside agencies and parenting classes, where appropriate, and will assist with arrangements for the use of these agencies. In these cases, a formal referral requesting support will need to be made by the School in consultation with parents, and submitted with parental consent.

Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive punctually to school and to lessons. Lateness will be recorded in registers by both tutors and teaching staff.

Where a pupil/student is late to a session, this will be dealt with by the Attendance Officer or class teacher in the first instance with a Level 1 response.

Where a pupil/student displays persistent lateness, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents. Support and a Level 2 response will be actioned. Possible consequences include:

- The withdrawal of free time at break or lunch;
- A temporary or permanent ban from representing the School on trips, visits or public activities;
- A temporary or permanent ban from taking part in school social activities;
- The withdrawal of an allocated place on a school trip, visit or activity.

Information on sanctions for poor punctuality can be found in our Behaviour Policy.

A pupil/student's punctuality record may be taken into account when allocating places on a school trip, visit or activity.

Off-Rolling

Off-rolling refers to the practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the School rather than in the best interests of the child.

Maiden Erlegh Trust schools will never off-roll children in these circumstances.

There are many reasons why a school might remove a pupil from the school roll, such as when a pupil moves house or a parent decides (without coercion from the School) to home educate their child. This is not off-rolling. If a school removes a pupil from the roll due to a formal permanent exclusion and follows the proper processes, this is not off-rolling.

Monitoring

Monitoring of attendance is carried out by the Attendance Officer in liaison with SLT. Pupils/students are referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer when their attendance has dropped below 85% or where their attendance is cause for concern (for example extended absence). The FSA will liaise between parents and The Trust and make every effort to get pupils/students back into school. The Attendance Officer will, if necessary, refer parents to the local authority for prosecution.

Every half term, an analysis of behaviour and attendance logs forms part of each School's self-evaluation. This analysis will then be shared with and discussed by the relevant Senior Leadership Team and Local Advisory Board.

The Headteacher and Local Advisor Board Chair will discuss trust-wide attendance and punctuality issues with the Board of Trustees.

ANNEX 1: SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

The strategic lead for the school attendance is:

Mr M Dillon Headteacher

Please email the school office at bhpsecretary@maidenerlegitrust.org or call 01344 455815

For support on a day-to-day basis, you should contact:

Mrs Della Payne– Attendance Officer & Family Support Advisor

Please email the school office at bhpsecretary@maidenerlegitrust.org or call 01344 455815

The school day starts at 08:50 and ends at 15:15/20pm.

The register closes at 09:15. Arrivals after this time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless an explanation is provided, and the school accepts it as a justification.

For wider help and support with school attendance families can contact:

- Your child's class teacher.
- The Attendance Team at the Local Authority:
 - Bracknell Forest: [Click here](#)
- Early Help is a service provided to families by the local authority to avoid situations escalating. The availability of provision varies between authorities, but it could be support from a Family Support Worker, Parenting Support, Youth Worker or Primary Mental Health Worker. Families can ask for help themselves or ask school to make a referral in their behalf.

ANNEX 2: FIRST DAY CALLING

These are the current procedures for First Day

START OF EACH DAY

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

Attendance officer
collate answer
telephone messages

EMAIL MESSAGES

Attendance officer
collate email
messages

REGISTERS

Class Teachers take
registers

9.15am Registers Close in Classes

All registers are reviewed by the Attendance Officer who prepares
a single list of pupils, by class, who are absent.
Attendance Officer visits classes to verify the absences.

9.15am

Attendance Officer starts process of contacting parents:
- text messages are sent to parents of all pupils absent
- process of locating absent pupils begins with those most vulnerable: these
parents are contacted by telephone

WHERE AN EXPLANATION IS GIVEN

Attendance Officer enters this into Bromcom/SIMs.

WHERE THERE IS NO RESPONSE BY PARENT

Is the child classified as vulnerable?

YES

- Direct telephone call to all stored numbers
- Follow-up text message
- Inform SLT, after further 30 minutes if still no response, who will advise re: levels of risk and next steps

NO

- Second text message sent
- Follow up call by 3.00pm with discussion on expectations on reporting absence. (See Communication Script with Parents)

WHERE A PARENT THINKS THEIR CHILD IS IN SCHOOL (IE: POTENTIAL TRUANTING OR RISK)

Attendance officer checks with Class Teacher

1. Phase staff alerted to do a sweep of the school and talk to pupil's classmates
2. SLT lead consulted for precedents etc
3. Parents advised to call the police if they are concerned

IN ALL INSTANCES

Our focus is to educate parents on our expectations for reporting absence.
The aim is for there to be no un-reported absences at close of register.

COMMUNICATION SCRIPT WITH PARENTS

If your child is too unwell for school, **please remember you MUST inform the school of their absence by 8.45am** on the morning of their absences, otherwise they will be recorded as missing, forcing the office to chase you. This could delay our response to a genuinely missing pupil.

Model Letter - Attendance at BHPS

For a school to be considered to have good attendance we must have an attendance level of at least 97%. Our current school attendance is 96%.

We know that for our children to succeed they need to have high attendance rates. Many pupils in our school have attendance rates of 99-100%.

If your child is too unwell for school, **please remember you MUST inform the school of their absence by 8:45am** on the morning of their absence otherwise they will be recorded as missing, forcing the office to chase you. This could delay our response to a genuinely missing pupil!

We send information letters to parents each half term to highlight your child's attendance percentage if it has fallen below 95%.

If you do not receive a letter, then your child's attendance is above 95%.

Letter 1a	Sent to parents whose children have attendance below 95%
Letter 1b	Sent to parents whose children have attendance below 90%
Letter 1c	Sent to parents whose children have attendance below 85%

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

The table below shows the amount of lost learning a child may have by missing school.

100% attendance	Zero days missed
99% attendance	Two days of absence across the year
97% attendance	Five days of absence across the year
95% attendance	Nine days of absence across the year: one week and four days of learning missed.
90% attendance	Nineteen days of absence across the year; three weeks and four days of learning missed
85% attendance	Twenty-eight days of absence across the year: five weeks and three days of learning missed.
80% attendance	Thirty-eight days of absence across the year: seven weeks and 3 days of learning missed.
75% attendance	Forty-six days of absence across the year: nine weeks and one day of learning missed.

Punctuality

Arriving at school on time and ready to learn is the best start to the day for our children. Even being 5 minutes late per day can add up to 3.4 school days missed.

Minutes Late Per Day	How Many School Days/Weeks Missed In 1 Year
5 minutes late	3.4 school days missed a year
10 minutes late	1.4 school weeks missed a year
15 minutes late	2.6 school weeks missed a year
20 minutes late	2.8 school weeks missed a year
30 minutes late	4 school weeks missed a year

Absences

Holidays during term time are not authorised and any holiday taken during term time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Any child absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning and will fall behind with their schoolwork. There are 190 statutory school days and the Department for Education expects all holidays to be arranged outside term time.

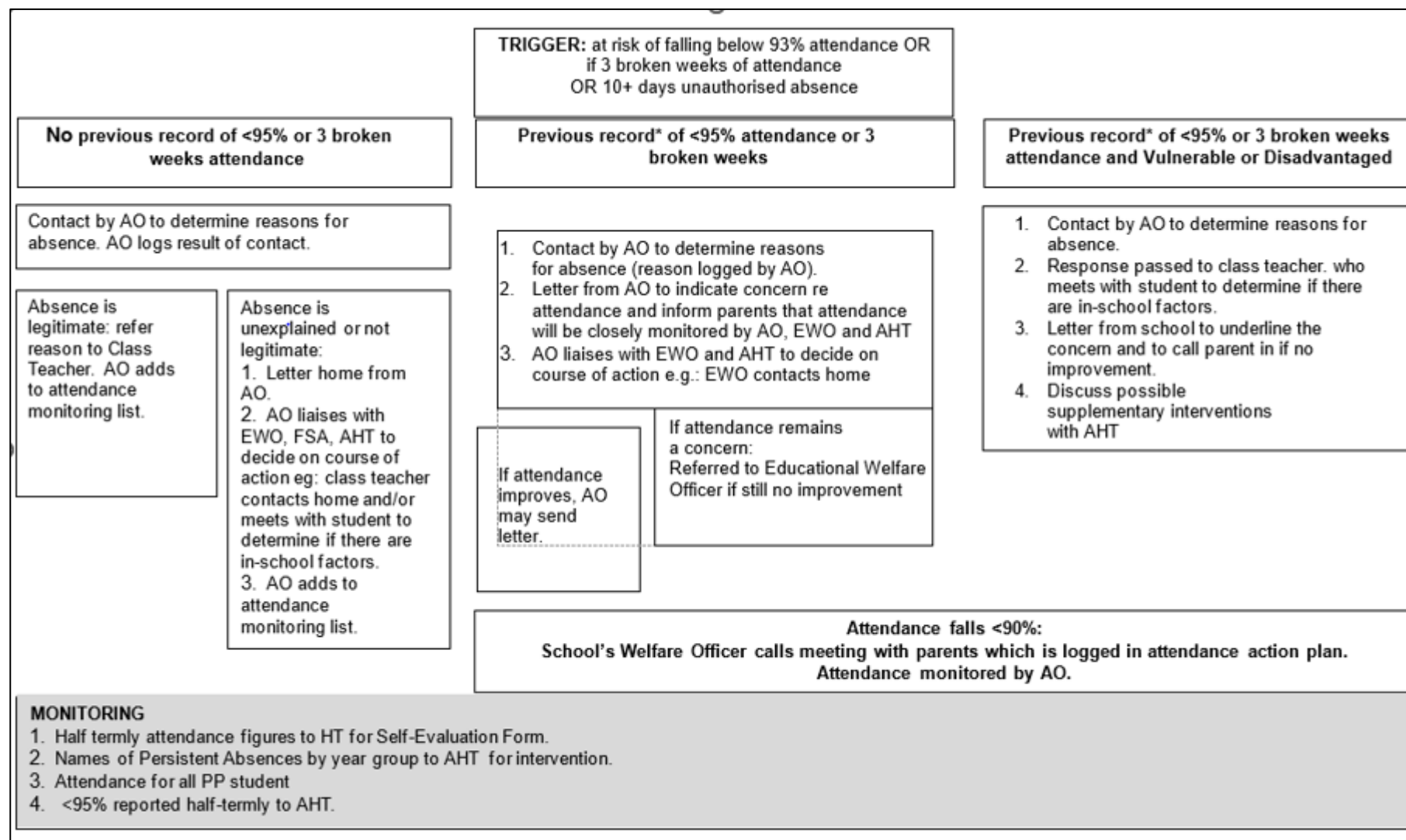
Please support us by making doctor, dentist and medical appointments outside of school hours when possible and ensure your child arrives at school on time.

A reminder: If your child is too unwell for school, please remember you MUST inform the school of their absence by 8:45am on the morning of their absence otherwise they will be recorded as missing, forcing the office to chase you. This could delay our response to a genuinely missing pupil.

Please email the school office at bhpsecretary@maidenerlegghtrust.org or call 01344 455815, using option 1 to leave a message explaining the reason for your child's absence.

Thank you for your support in maximising attendance in order to give our pupils the very best chances to continue to succeed.

ANNEX 3: REDUCING PERSISTENT ABSENCE



In the event of non-attendance, we will aim to visit students every ten school days both as a safeguarding measure and as a supportive measure to maintain communication between home and school.

In the event that we have not been able to see the student we will ask Social Care and/or the police to conduct a welfare check on our behalf.

Where the absence is unauthorised, work will NOT be provided and failure to engage with school will result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Service and/or Children's Social Care.

ANNEX 4: PROCEDURES FOR POTENTIAL CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

1. See Annex 2 for actions relating to persistent or regular unauthorised absence.
2. For actions regarding Exclusions see the Behaviour and Exclusions policy.
3. Where we are aware that a student is moving to a new, named, school, we post the student's Common Transfer File (CTF) on the s2s website to the destination school.
4. Where we are aware that a student is moving to abroad, to an independent school or to school not using Common Transfer Files, the CTF is posed on the s2s website to the out of maintained school destination.
5. Where we are aware that a student is moving to a British Forces school (a) if we know the name of the school we transfer the CTF using the s2s website to destination SCE School (b) if we do not know the name of the school, we refer the student to the Education Welfare Service.
6. Where we are aware that a student has left or is leaving and we do not know the destination school, we refer to the Education Welfare Service.

NB: We use Bracknell Forest Council's Children Missing in Education Policy as a guide.

ANNEX 4: ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES – BHPS

This School's Attendance Procedures are set in consideration and consequence of the provisions of the following;

- ***The Education Act 1996***
- ***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013***
- ***The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013***
- ***Department For Education Guidance as from time to time issued in respect of school attendance matters***

In so far as any specific provision of the above does not automatically apply to all schools, this school, as an Academy Trust school, in setting its own Attendance Policy, adopts and follows the provisions and effect of the above"

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. The Education Act of 1996 states that a parent is responsible for ensuring their child attends regularly and punctually. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

The Court has determined that "Regular" attendance means that which is "*in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school*" (*Isle of Wight Council -v- Platt* (6th April 2017) [Supreme Court] [2017] UKSC 28 (on appeal from [2016] EWHC 1283 (Admin)).

Birch Hill Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

Absence

This school expects its pupils to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there are good reasons for the absence and the absence is authorised.

There are two main categories of absence:

- **Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification of the absence, or given approval in advance for the absence.**
- **Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence after a parent's request.**

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.

Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result, the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off school with a minor ailment such as headache or cold is not acceptable. Repeated absence will require us to request that you obtain evidence from your doctor's surgery, such as a stamped appointment card or a prescription. Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for this information and will not be liable for the cost.

School Practice:

School starts at 8.50am. Registers are taken immediately; they are taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session.

A child who arrives after the taking of the register is marked as late and the reason given and the number of minutes they are late are recorded. The number of minutes late each month is monitored.

A child who arrives after the registers close at 9.15am is marked as absent in the register. Parents/guardians should always telephone the school office on 01344 455815 or send an e-mail if their child is not attending school by 8.45am. The Attendance Officer will text or telephone parents on the first morning of an absence if notification has not been received.

Registers are checked regularly and where there is an unexplained absence, Attendance Officer will telephone or a written request will be sent for an explanation. After three weeks, the absence will be marked as unauthorised if no reason is provided

Monthly analysis of absenteeism will be carried out and letters may be sent to parents if attendance falls below expected levels.

If attendance does not improve, parents may be called in to discuss the matter with the Class teacher. If there is no improvement, parents may be called in to go through an attendance action plan with the school's Education Welfare Officer.

Further absence may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Lateness

Parents and carers are expected to bring their child to school on time. A child arriving after registration, i.e., after 8.50am is disruptive for the class and embarrassing for the child. Vital information is given at the start of the school day and the child's learning may be affected if he/she is not present for the full session. Punctuality is an important life skill. Persistent lateness will be followed up by the school and may be referred to the Education Welfare Service if it continues.

A pupil arriving late:

- Should enter the building through the main entrance and report to the school office.
- Will have their lateness recorded on MIS system.
- Will be sent to/taken to their classroom.

Parents are not permitted to take their child to the classroom as this disrupts teaching. If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed, the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety requirements. If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. You may be asked for proof of the appointment.

Term Time Leave of Absence

At Birch Hill Primary we believe term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure that your child achieves to their full potential and there is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement.

However, we recognise that there may be occasions where a parent considers there are extenuating or compassionate reasons for such absence. As outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the Headteacher will decide if the circumstances are "exceptional" and thus whether or not the absence will be "authorised".

Parent Action

Parents must request leave as far in advance as possible, giving at least 15 days' notice.

The request, to be made by the parent with whom the child normally resides, must be made in writing using the "Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time" form available from the school office/school website.

The request must include the reason why it is felt necessary to take leave during term time (the "exceptional" circumstances).

- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed in writing within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

School Action

On receipt, the Headteacher of the school, or such person as duly authorised by the Headteacher to do so on their behalf, will consider the submitted application for leave of absence during term time and will take in to account the/any reason as given by the parent for seeking such leave of absence ahead of deciding whether or not such given reasons are, in their view, "exceptional" to merit the granting such leave of absence during term time.

The parent who submitted the application for leave of absence during term time will be notified by the school within 7 days of receiving the application of the school's decision in response to the application.

Term time absence taken without authorisation may, where the criteria for doing so is met, be referred by the School to the Educational Welfare Service

Referral may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued in accordance with Bracknell Forest Council's *"Code of Conduct and Protocol for The Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices"*.

As a school we agree and endorse Bracknell Forest Council's "Code of Conduct and Protocol for The Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (Revised June 2017).

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice may be issued to each parent for each child. **THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.**

If an issued Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within the prescribed time limit for payment, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates' Court for an offence contrary to Section 444 Education Act 1996, (failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil of compulsory school age), in the same way as if the Fixed Penalty Notice had never been issued.

The purpose of the Fixed Penalty Notice, where it is considered appropriate for such Notice to be issued, is to give a parent the time limited opportunity to avoid prosecution for a substantive offence contrary to Section 444 Education 1996. Any such prosecution following non-payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice will be for a substantive offence contrary to S. 444 Education Act 1996, rather than for non-payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the less serious offence contrary to

S. 444(1) Education Act 1996 (being the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and /or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £1,000.00.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the more serious offence contrary to

S. 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 (where the parent knows that the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and the parent fails without reasonable justification to cause that child to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and / or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding

£2,500.00 and / or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or else any such community-based Sentence as deemed appropriate by the Court.

In addition, in all cases where one of the substantive offences is proved, the Prosecution will seek an Order for the Defendant to pay a contribution towards the Prosecution Costs of the case, including investigation costs, the application for which will be served upon the Defendants at the time of the relevant Court proceedings.

In addition, when a Court passes a sentence, it must also order that the relevant "Victim Surcharge" be paid by Defendants. Revenue raised from the Victim Surcharge is used by Central Government to fund victim of crime services through the "Victim and General Fund". The amount of the Victim Surcharge to be paid by Defendants depends on the type of Sentence imposed and, in the case of an adult offender receiving the maximum level of Sentence applicable for the type offences covered by this Attendance Policy, may result in a Victim Surcharge of up to £115.00 per Defendant / parent.

In addition to any other Sentence imposed, the Court has the ancillary power to impose a "Parenting Order", not exceeding 12 months in duration, on parents, where the Court considers such an Order appropriate. Any person found guilty of failing without reasonable excuse to comply with the requirement of a "Parenting Order" or with a direction of the nominated Responsible Officer in respect of it is liable to Breach proceedings and, in the event of conviction for the same, to a fine, not exceeding £1,000,00, and or any other non-imprisonable Sentencing option available to the Court in such case.

Authorisation for term time leave will not be given for the following reasons:

- Availability or cost.
- Extended holiday at the beginning or end of the term.
- A term-time booking made in error by the parent or another person.

Any absence that has not been authorised may be referred to the Education Welfare Service and, where the criteria for doing so is met, may result in prosecution proceedings or a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued per parent per child

There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which every child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. Parents should ensure that family holidays are taken during school holiday periods only.

The role of the school management

Pupils learn best when parents and staff work in partnership to maximise pupils' attendance at school and everyone is clear of expectations and procedures. We expect that as soon as your child starts their education at Birch Hill Primary, you will abide by our attendance policy.

The staff at Birch Hill Primary has an obligation to enquire and challenge the reasons for pupils' absences and/or lateness and do insist on written evidence for any such absences. There is also an expectation that the staff report concerns over absence and lateness to the Headteacher.

The school may send letters to parents, guardians or carers as to their child's current attendance level, unexplained absences or lateness or any other concerns.

The school collects information daily and weekly from the registers on absences.

The role of the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an

offence".

Bracknell Forest Council, through the Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by a Headteacher can be issued as long as the evidence for the request is robust and the following criteria are met: -

- Where there is a minimum of 10 school sessions of unauthorised absence (5 school days) in any 10-week period (these do not need to be consecutive)
- Where term time leave is taken without obtaining authorisation from the school
- Unwarranted delayed return from term time leave without authorisation
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed (U code) on 10 or more occasions in a 10-week period
- Parents' or carers' failure to make arrangements to ensure that children who have been excluded from school are not in a public place at prescribed times during the first five school days of any exclusion, without reasonable justification*

*It is incumbent upon the parent(s) in such circumstances to provide proof of reasonable justification, for example, that the child or young person needed to attend a pre-arranged medical appointment, or a medical emergency requiring the child to be supervised elsewhere than at home.

A Penalty Notice will be issued on the first occasion if appropriate.

When a pupil is referred to the Education Welfare Service because of persistent poor attendance there are various actions that can be taken to try to bring about an improvement. The Fast Track Intervention framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. Fast Track involves engaging the parent in specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually 8 weeks). Parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings may be initiated in the Magistrates' Court.

Promoting Good Attendance

We celebrate excellent attendance throughout our school, in line with our behaviour policy and reward system.

What parents can do to help

Please work with the school staff and ensure you are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as this has a huge impact on a pupils learning.

Parents must:

- Not condone your child's absences
- Telephone the school each day that your child is unable to attend school due to illness
- Email the school when your child returns
- Avoid appointments during the school day.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.