



BROOKE HILL ACADEMY TRUST

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Brooke Hill Academy Trust promotes the view that regular, punctual attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our pupils and we take seriously our responsibility to monitor and promote this. We feel the whole school community has a responsibility for punctuality and attendance and we work closely with parents and carers to promote regular, punctual attendance.

Term time leave of absence

In exceptional circumstances (a once in a life time event) the Head of School may grant leave of absence during the school term. This is not a parent's right and will not include time out for a family holiday. Parents/carers must apply to the Head of School to request leave of absence who will judge each application on its own merit. (Appendix 1)

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the School (not by the Parent/Carers), as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness. Parents/Carers must inform the School of the symptoms their child has as 'unwell' or 'ill' is insufficient and it can't be authorised.

Unauthorised absence is when a child is away from school without permission of the Head of School. These are absences which the school does not consider to be reasonable, for which no explanation has been given or has never been properly explained.

From 1st September 2013, the amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removes the reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as statutory threshold of 10 school days

The amendments set out that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are “exceptional circumstances”. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. The government has not defined ‘exceptional circumstances’ other than to say it is a **one off lifetime event**.

It is up to the school to consider each request individually and we would consider factors such as:

- The nature of the request and why it could not be taken in holiday time
- General welfare of the pupil and family circumstances
- Pupil’s educational needs and ability to catch up on work missed
- Proximity to national tests such as SATS
- Frequency of requests from pupil’s parents

Exceptional circumstances will be regarded as one-off situations. Should a service family wish to apply for absence, a letter of authorization must be sought from the Unit Welfare Officer in order for the absence to be considered. The following will generally not be considered ‘exceptional’:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Family holidays in UK or abroad
- Family day trips
- Taking holiday to coincide with family who have different term times or holidays

All children may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the School, Parents/Carers and the child. If the child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the School may refer the child to the Social Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO) from the Local Authority. The SIDO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed, the SIDO can use court proceedings to prosecute parents /carers and fixed penalty notices can be applied.

From **1st September 2013** these charges have been:

- £60 fine (per parent/carer, per child) if paid within 21 days
- £120 fine (per parent / carer, per child) if paid after the 21 days but before 28 days

The government have indicated that the fine is due to increase during the next academic year to £125 per parent/carer if paid within 21 days and £250 per parent / career if paid after the 21 days but before 28 days.

Parents/carers may wish to contact the SIDO themselves to ask for help or information. The SIDO is independent of the School and will give impartial advice. The telephone number is available from contacting the Local Authority.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1. Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.05am either by telephone or by sending an absence note into school stating the symptoms. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the School each time: telephone calls or notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdressers appointments, etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which take place during school time.

Parent/carers and pupils are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours wherever possible. Please be aware that absence due to sickness and / or diarrhea requires the child to be absent from school for 48hrs from the cessation of the illness.

2. Absence without notification

If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation for the absence by 9.15am the school will contact the Parent/carer by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence.

3. Lateness

Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for that session unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parent/Carers are expected to ensure that pupils are present at registration. A late mark is awarded if arrival is after 9.10am but before 9.20am whilst the register is still open. If the pupil arrives after 9.20am when the register has already closed, and unauthorised mark is awarded. Children arriving late to school MUST be signed in by their parents/carers. They are not expected to arrive unattended.

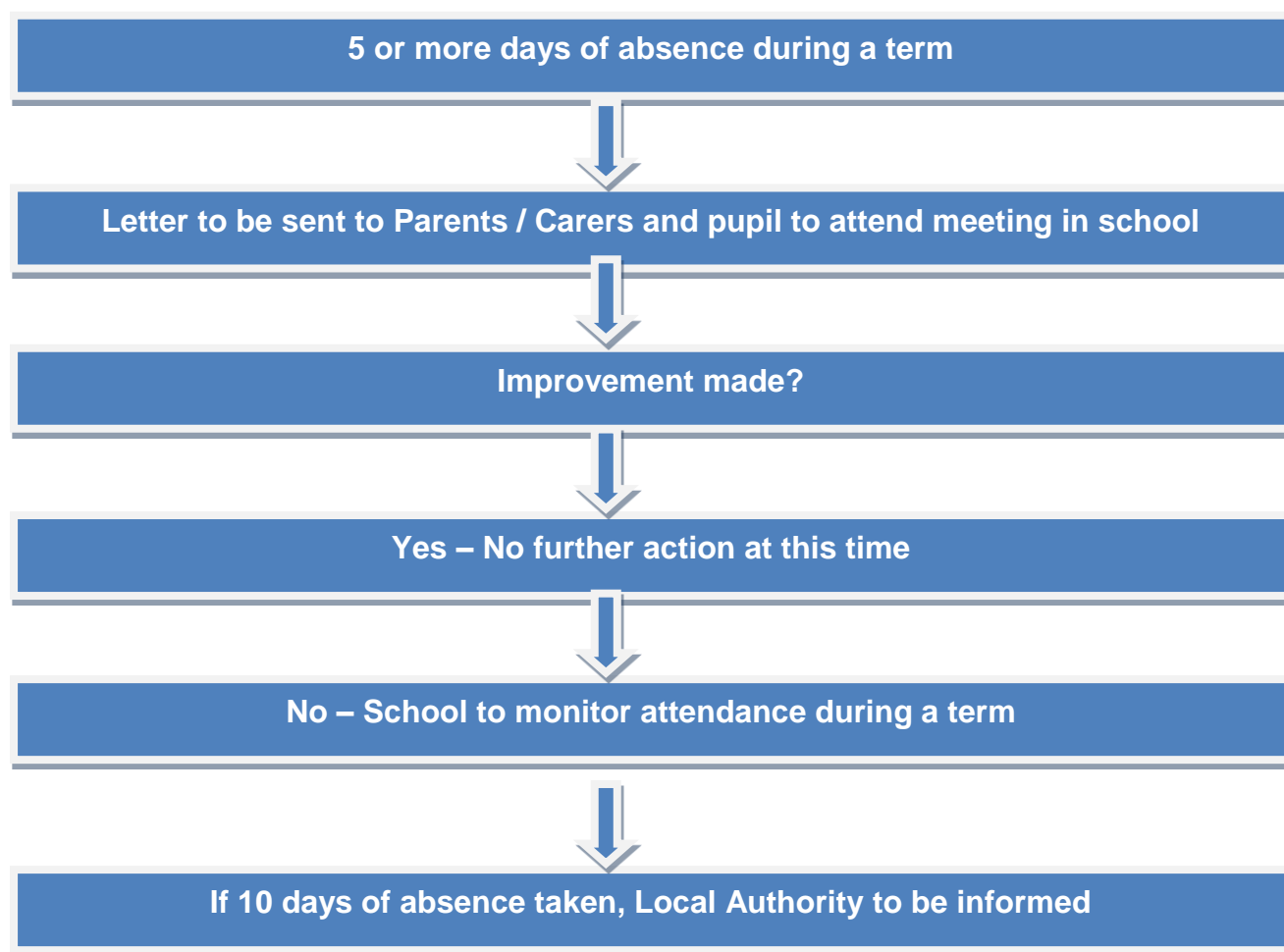
Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

99%+	Excellent - attendance at this level will ensure your child is enjoying and achieving along with their peers.
97-98%	Average - this level of attendance will now be impacting your child's learning. You should now be working with the school to improve this attendance.
96%	Poor - The cumulative effect of this level of absence will now impact on your child's overall levels at SATs and up to GCSE
Below 96%	Unacceptable –Your child is now falling into “Persistent Absence”. This is of serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and may lead to your prosecution for failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. The school will start not to authorise all absence and you may have to provide medical evidence for absence due to illness.

Inclusion and Equality Statement

The mission statement of our school reflects our ethos of valuing individuality and diversity. We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of gender, race, cultural background, ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or any physical or sensory disability. We learn that people are not all the same. We believe that inclusion and equality is about the school fitting around your child.

Department for Education Procedures for Poor Attendance



Notes:

- The schools will be required to look for split illnesses, where off days of illness are being taken (this will include patterns of absence).
- Unauthorised holidays will be taken into account.
- If the absences are due to illness (5 days or more) this absence will only be authorised if medical evidence is provided. Please note that in these circumstances, all future absences will require medical evidence also.
- Where poor attendance is a concern, all medical appointments can only be authorised where proof of appointment is given (e.g. medical appointment card / letter).
- The school can only authorise a maximum of half a day absence for medical appointments unless proof of appointment can be provided.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1. Term Time Absence Authorisation Form
- Appendix 2. Website Information
- Appendix 3. Outstanding Absences Letter
- Appendix 4. Medical Letter

Appendix 5. Letter of Concern (5 or more absences in a term)

Appendix 6. Lateness Letter

SIGNATURES AND DATES

Chair of Governors:

Head of School:

Date when policy was approved :

Review date:

Brooke Hill Academy Trust**Term Time Absence Authorisation – Parental Request Form**

The regulations concerning authorised absences during term time have been tightened significantly throughout ‘The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. The purpose of the new regulation is to ‘clarify that leave of absence shall not be granted by schools unless there are “exceptional circumstances”.

In practice the changes mean that:

- Headteachers are not allowed to authorise absences during term time for family holidays in any circumstances.
- The 10 day per annum discretionary guidance for absence has been withdrawn
- Head teachers may only authorise term time absence for an exceptional, once in a lifetime even and any application must be received 10 days prior to the event.

I am requesting a leave of absence for my child/children.

Name of child/children:Class (es):

For the following reasons (please continue of the reverse if more space required):

Dates of absence from:/...../..... to/...../..... Total number of days or part days:

I have read the information above and provided in parent pamphlet on “term-time leave of absence”.

Print name: Date:..... Signed:

In the case if separated families if either parent does not agree to the absence, they must write to the school formally stating this. In these cases the parent who refuses permission will not be fined.

School Response

The school has authorised / not authorised your request (reasons below if not authorised):

..... Date:

Warning

A fixed penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority if you choose to take unauthorised term time leave of absence. Each parent/carer may be liable to a penalty of £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days and £120 (per child) if paid after 21 days but before 28 days.

The government have indicated that the fine is due to increase during the next academic year.

Dear Parent/Carer,

As a school we regard attendance as critical to student progress. One aspect we consider important is prompt communication between home and school when your child is unavoidably absent.

All letters regarding attendance and absence should be addressed to the school office. All pupils arriving late to school and leaving early should be signed in /out by parents / carers. This will ensure that your child's attendance record is altered as soon as a change occurs and that we are aware of your child's whereabouts.

If your child is absent due to a medical appointment please could you provide the school office with a copy of the appointment card or letter so that we can keep it on file.

These simple changes will help us to improve our commitment to ensuring that your child's attendance is recorded as accurately as possible.

Yours sincerely,

(Head of School)

Dear <parents name>

<child's name & class>

Unfortunately your child has outstanding absence(s) on their attendance record and we do not seem to have received either a telephone call or a letter from you explaining the reason for the absence.

I would very much appreciate it if you could complete the tear off slip below and return it as soon as possible in order for us to ensure that your child's attendance is recorded accurately.

Failure to return the slip will result in your child's absence being marked as unauthorised.

Please note that "poorly" and "unwell" are not classed as reasons for absence. Therefore, if these are given either over the telephone or in writing, the absence has to be recorded as unauthorised.

Yours sincerely,

(Head of School)

.....
Please return to the school office

<child's name & class>

<Date of unknown absence>

The absence above was due to:

Signed:

Date:

Dear <parents name>
<child's name & class>

We have noticed from our audit required by Rutland County Council that your child's attendance is currently <% attendance>. This continues to fall below the target of 96% agreed with the Local Authority. We notice that many of the absences are due to medical appointments.

Good attendance at a school is important and it is your legal responsibility to ensure that this happens. It is proved that absence below 96% can have a negative effect on achievement.

Therefore, in order for future absences to be authorised, we request that you provide an appointment card or medical letter covering the period of absence. Failure to do this will result in the absence being coded as unauthorised.

In the meantime, please contact the school if there is anything more that we can do to support you to improve your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

(Head of School)

Dear <parents name>

<childs name>

From monitoring our registers we find that your child's attendance has dropped to below 96% which is a concern to us because your child may not have had access to the curriculum and may not achieve along with their peers.

As you know it is important that students attend school regularly. An absence of 5% equates to 1 day off in every 20.

Therefore we will be monitoring your child's attendance this term and expect and immediate and sustained improvement.

If these absences were due to ongoing illnesses, please contact the school so that support a can be put in place to help your child achieve their full potential.

If any sessions of absence have not been authorised but the school, we must make you aware that the Local Authority will be contacted as unauthorised absences may lead to prosecution under The Education Act.

If there is anything we can do to support you in getting your child's attendance back to an acceptable level, please contact the school to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely,

(Head of School)

Dear <parents name>
<child's name & class>

Following previous correspondence, your child has continued to be absent from school. As you know it is important that students attend school regularly. An absence of 5% equates to 1 day off in every 20.

We must, therefore, make you aware that the Local Authority will not be contacted regarding your child's attendance level and this may lead to prosecution under The Education Act.

If any absences were due to ongoing illness, please contact the school so that support can be put in place to help your child to achieve their full potential.

If there is anything we can do to support you in getting your child's attendance back to an acceptable level, please contact the school to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

(Head of School)

Dear <parents name>
<child's name & class>

We notice from our audit, which is a requirement by Rutland County Council, that your child has been late on a number of occasions. A total of < > out of a possible <> days have been recorded this term.

We have been informed but the Local Authority that when lateness exceeds 5 within a term there may be a possibility of prosecution. This is the last thing we want to happen to any of our families. We would prefer to resolve any issues within school and support one another.

If there are any details you think we need to be made aware of, please let us know.

Thanks you for your help with this matter.

Yours sincerely,

(Head of School

Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed in November 2019

Signed _____ Date _____

Chair of the Premises Governors Committee