



## Attendance Policy

Signed: K.Bratt

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(By Local Governing Body)

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# **Brotherton & Byram Attendance Policy**

## **Introduction**

In order for all children to achieve their full potential they must be in school every day, on time and ready to learn. Brotherton & Byram Academy places a high value on punctual and regular attendance. Every child and family in the academies will be made aware of the importance of this through regular updates, the positive promotion of good attendance, rewards for good attendance and, where necessary, discussions with families about the need to improve attendance and punctuality. We wish to foster good attendance and punctuality habits from the early years and throughout the child's school career and into adult life.

## **Responsibilities**

Improving the attendance and therefore life chances of the children in the school, is the responsibility of parents/carers, its staff and the child. Working together in partnership will ensure each child is most likely to achieve their full potential by ensuring their frequent and punctual attendance.

The fair and consistent application of the policy is the responsibility of all staff.

Staff at school will take the attendance register twice a day: at the start of each morning and once during the afternoon. The Academies will also notify the local authority if a pupil has irregular attendance or is absent continuously without authorisation.

## **Aims of the policy to promote good attendance**

Explicit in the overall aim of the school is the principle that children should feel secure and happy in a well-ordered environment and that they should be enthusiastic about coming to school. Children have a right to experience a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum; non attendance deprives them of this opportunity.

It is the aim of this policy that unauthorised absence should be 0% on a year-by-year basis and that authorised absences should be kept to a minimum. Whole school and individual monitoring will be in line with targets set by the Ebor Academy Trust on an annual basis.

In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils in the schools we will:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the schools in the Trust
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- Implement a common systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Implement a common system of rewards for attendance
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and carers
- Ensure we have positive and consistent methods of communication about attendance matters with families and the schools in the Trust
- Work in partnership with supporting services and agencies and the Local Authority
- Recognise and meet the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

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## **Persistent Absence**

Guidance from the Department for Education (2011) advises that if a child's attendance is below 90% they will be referred to as 'Persistent Absence'. Schools in the Ebor Academy Trust will work closely with parents and carers, the local authority and other external agencies to improve persistent absenteeism. This may include the use of parenting contracts and Attendance Panels.

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

There are a series of codes defined by the Department of Education that are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the correct codes are recorded and that patterns in children's attendance are analysed.

Parents and carers should be made aware that it is for the Executive Headteacher and/or the Headteacher to decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. All reasons given for a child's absence are considered by the academy. As examples, absence from school **may** be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- genuine illness
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Absence from school will **not** be authorised for:

- shopping
- birthdays
- minding the house
- caring for brothers/sisters/relatives
- parent/carer illness
- sibling illness
- arrivals after a specific time in the morning – please see the guidance below for each academy

The Executive Headteacher and/or the Headteacher will only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be treated on an individual basis. Advice on what constitutes exceptional circumstances suggests situations such as children of service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside the term time, or families who need to spend time together following a crisis. Parents and carers are asked to ensure that they make any medical appointments for their child outside of the school day.

If the Executive Headteacher and/or the Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for him or her to determine the length of time that any child can be away from school. As a norm, leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents and carers should put in writing all requests for a child's absence from school for any purpose. This should be sent to the school marked well in advance of any request for leave of absence during term time. Circumstances such as previous attendance, academic achievement, family circumstances and the time of year, will be taken into account. If your child has an older sibling, contact will also be made with local secondary schools so that a joint decision can be made. Should a leave of absence request not be authorised and your child is still taken out of school, a 'Fixed Penalty Notice' could be issued.

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## **Fixed Penalty Notice**

In certain circumstances, parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice where they take a holiday in term time which is not authorised by the Executive Headteacher and/or the Headteacher. A Fixed Penalty Notice can require a parent to pay a sum of either £60 or £120. Each parent can be issued with a notice for each child so two parents with two children can potentially be issued with four notices.

## **Support and guidance available to those with poor attendance and punctuality**

Where persistent absence occurs, or where persistent lateness or poor attendance is identified through the monitoring processes, the appropriate member of staff in each academy will contact the family. They will offer support and assistance to families who are experiencing difficulties in getting their children to school. This will be via appointments in school, guidance and advice on attendance or contact with other agencies. In some cases, families will be offered a Parenting Contract for attendance, Common Assessment or CAF assessment in order to fully support the family concerned. In more severe cases, such as 'Persistent Absence', staff will contact the Local Authority's Front Door Service. Together they will work with the family to offer further support and guidance. If attendance continues to be poor, at this point steps may be taken, as dictated by law, which may result in prosecution for non-attendance.

The Ebor Academy Trust has a duty to refer regular absence (authorised and unauthorised) to the relevant local authority. This may include any evidence to show how schools in the Trust have supported the pupil and parent to improve attendance. It is for each local authority to judge each referral on its own merits and make a decision on the next probable course of action.

## **Further information for parents and carers**

Parents and carers are encouraged to read the guidance on authorised and unauthorised absence and information on Fixed Penalty Notices in the document 'School Attendance Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice August 2013' Reference: DFE-00158-2013 via the Department for Education website [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)

The school day at Brotherton and Byram Primary Academy begins at 8.45am. Children are expected to be on time every day so that they can access all the learning opportunities. All children are encouraged to be in time for the start of the day at 8.45am.

- Doors open at 8.35am and close at 8:45am.
- Registration Period: 8.45am – 9.00am.
- Close registers: 9.00am.
- 9.00am gates into the playground and the front gate are locked.
- Children arriving after 9.00am enter school through the office entrance.
- Arrivals after 9.00am but before 9.30am are marked as Late or 'L' on the register and staff will take children to class.
- Arrivals after 9.30am are marked as unauthorised absence or 'U' on the register.

### **Late arrivals:**

Where a child has not been able to join their class, they must access school through the main school office. All children arriving after 9.00am will leave their parents in the school office area. This is to ensure health and safety at all times. If a child arrives after 9.00am, parents/carers will be asked to give a reason for being late. If a child arrives after 9.30am they will be marked as absent (unauthorised) for the morning session. If lateness is persistent or deemed to be unauthorised absence, parents/carers will be contacted in writing and invited to meet with the school.

### **Reporting an expected absence i.e. medical reasons**

Parents/Carers are asked to contact the school office by 8.55am on the first day of absence and then every day of absence, or in writing stating the reason and period of time that your child will be absent from school. If a child is taken out of school for an appointment, parents must sign them out and provide a copy of the appointment letter.

### **Reporting an unexpected absence i.e. illness**

Parents/carers are asked to telephone the school office as soon as possible to confirm the reason why and how long your child will be absent from school.

### **First Day Contact:**

A phone call home will be made for any child who is not in school by 9.30am and where a reason has not been given, or a phone message received. **There will be no exceptions to this process.** Where contact with a parent/carer has been unsuccessful, the child will be marked as having an unauthorised absence. The school will contact the parent/carer on the second and each subsequent day of absence asking for a reason. If the school are unable to contact the parent, they will then send an email and message via ParentHub at 9.45am. At 10.00am if there has still been no contact with parent or authorised emergency contact, the headteacher (or senior member of staff in the absence of the headteacher) together with another member of staff will visit the child's home address to check on the child and speak to the parent. If contact still cannot be made, the school will request a community police welfare visit, until contact is made.

Parents and carers will be asked how long they expect the child to be absent from school. If the absence continues after the expected return date and no contact has been made to school to

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inform them of the reason for a longer absence than anticipated, school will make daily phone contact until the child returns to school. If school has a concern that the absence may be a safeguarding matter it will contact the community police to make a call to the child's home to ensure the safety of the child.

### **Children who are 'Missing in Education':**

Any child who does not take up their place within mainstream education, or who is repeatedly marked as absent without reason, the school will refer to the safeguarding policy for further information and/or contact the Front Door Service for further information

### **Weekly Tracking of Attendance:**

All attendance is tracked and recorded on a weekly basis. This helps to identify trends in absence or situations where attendance is dropping in a short space of time.

### **Half Termly Attendance Monitoring:**

The school reviews the attendance rate of every child each term. Where attendance has dropped below 95%, parents will be informed and encouraged to reach at least 96%. Where attendance has dropped below 90%, the headteacher will contact the parent/carer in writing offering a school meeting. Support will be offered during the meeting from school and external support may be offered through a Common Assessment or CAF and external agencies. Where attendance becomes persistent (below 90%), an action plan may be put in place to see attendance rapidly improve.

### **School incentives to support good attendance**

#### **Weekly attendance awards:**

We promote the ethic of being In School Every Day and On Time. During the Monday weekly assembly, the class with the best attendance will win a prize on the 'Classopoly' board.

#### **Yearly attendance certificates:**

At the end of each year, every child who has 100% attendance (with no exceptions for medical appointments, illnesses, holidays etc.) will receive a congratulatory certificate to mark the achievement.