

Attendance Information: Policy

BEAM COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Policy reviewed and adopted: October 2017

Head of School

..... Date:.....

Chair of Governors

..... Date:.....

Beam County Primary School is committed to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. We believe it is beyond question that pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Therefore we intend to promulgate the message that missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind

1. Aim

If pupils are to gain the maximum benefit from the education provided for them at school it is important that they attend punctually and regularly. We will make parents aware of the clear link between high rates of attendance and high levels of attainment. We will also aim to establish high levels of expectation in our pupils in relation to punctuality and attendance.

The aim of Beam County Primary's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

Beam takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This document is supported by our policies on **safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning (SEND and Inclusion)**.

2. Legal framework

Beam County Primary is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this document accordingly.

The review and update of this policy has been in line with the DfE document (Reference: DFE-00257-2013) School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. November 2016.

This guidance summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The *Education Act 1996* states that:

The parent 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.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age —

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) —

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

Note: A “parent” includes any adult with whom the child normally resides.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Beam County Primary School

The school will be maintained to a high standard of cleanliness, lighting, heating and ventilation. Displays reflect our high standards and regularly updated. Children have safe and stimulating areas to play and socialise in. Toilets are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and privacy. Staff dealing with attendance and lateness issues are required to be friendly and welcoming. Children and parents understand and are regularly reminded of the school behaviour and discipline code. The teaching staff understand and make parents and children aware of the steps taken to deal with bullying.

Governing body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review the school's attendance rules and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the rules effectively
- nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year
- take time at governors' meetings to regularly review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- ensure that senior leaders make the necessary referrals to the local authority and other relevant agencies in individual cases of non-attendance
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- report to the governing body on attendance.
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance registers are taken for both sessions each school day.
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (**see section 4**), and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- consider the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If there are exceptional circumstances and parents would like to make a special request for term time holiday absence, they may do so to the headteacher (**see section 4.5**)
- cannot authorise absences. Only school's authorise absences. A note from a parent is not an automatic right to authorisation. Unauthorised absences can mean that a criminal offence is being committed by parents for which they can be prosecuted.

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- attend all lessons ready to learn.
- bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen. Make sure it does not stay in a coat pocket or at the bottom of a bag
- follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (**see section 4.8**). Pupils who have the school's agreement to come to school without an bringing them are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all pupils

what this procedure is. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences. Only the school can authorise absence.

Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let us know what date they expect the child to return. This should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child. The follow-up information could alternatively be sent to us by email (see the website's "contact us" page). Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

4.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day/each day of absence. When the child returns to school they should bring confirmation from their parent explaining the absence – this is for the school records.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper. If these are not provided on request it may result in the absence continuing to be classed as unauthorised.

4.2 Medical or dental appointments

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

4.3 Authorised absences

There may be some exceptional instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

4.4 Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. Parents will be expected to ensure any work that is sent home is completed by their child.

4.5 Family holidays and extended leave

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the headteacher at least 4 school weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as

a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration. An application form for requesting permission can be obtained from the school office.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved and the length of absence approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the headteacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be subject to further action such as a fixed penalty notice fine or prosecution by the local authority.

4.6 Religious observance

Beam County Primary recognises that there may be times where religious festivals fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, the school may seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

4.7 Late arrival

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon. In the morning **registration begins at 8:55am**. Pupils who arrive after this time will be marked as late.

Parents of children who arrive late must take them to the school Reception area to give a reason for their lateness and to sign their children in. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. Signing in is vital to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for if there is an emergency. The School also takes the attendance register during the afternoon of each school day. Arrivals after the register will be marked as "late".

Late arrival after the register is closed can be recorded as "U" for unauthorised lateness and counted as unauthorised absence on the pupil's attendance record.

Persistent lateness is tantamount to failure to ensure a child's regular school attendance as required by the Education Act 1996.

5. School action: following up absences

Class attendance registers are taken and stored electronically using InqterisG2. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of absences emerges the school will contact the parent or carer.

Class teachers may remind pupils for written explanation from their parents/carers for their absence upon the pupil's return from being away but it remains the responsibility of the parent (and never the child) to make sure explanations are received by the school. They are used when it is decided whether or not an absence will be authorised. Written explanations are for the school records and necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence.

Where pupils have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

Where a child has been absent from school for a period of more than 20 school days, and where the absence was unauthorised and both the school and LA have been unable to contact the parents, the school may remove the child from the school roll. The school will notify the local authority when such action is taken.

When there is concern about a child's attendance record the school will make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer. The role and powers of the Attendance Officer are explained on the Barking and Dagenham Council Website <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-learning/schools-in-the-borough/school-attendance/sas-improving-school-attendance/>

Absence and Attendance Codes

Taken from School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities: DfE November 2016

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Registers are kept open for a reasonable length of time but not for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with **code U**, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate. We regard our registers as closed at 9:25pm for the morning and 1:45pm for the second session.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision.

Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site

educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been

taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with a prospective transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Authorised Absence from School

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.

Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended.

This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.