



**Brookland Junior School**  
*Moving Forward Together*

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**April 2018**

## **ATTENDANCE STATEMENT**

At Brookland Junior School, we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to excellent standards of attendance and punctuality to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

### **Expectations**

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils.

#### **The School:**

- will provide a safe learning environment.
- will ensure that records of attendance are maintained on a daily basis, according to government legislation and guidance.
- will follow up all instances of absence using a first response system.
- will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- will work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole - as one of their key tasks.
- will have clear policies in place to address persistent absence.

#### **The Parents:**

- are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- will inform school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school
- will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary.
- will ensure that school is informed of any changes of contact details.
- will work in partnership with us to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- avoid booking holidays during term time

#### **The Pupils**

- are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually.
- are expected to be ready to learn.

## **REGISTRATION**

At Brookland Junior School, the pupils go directly to their classrooms from 8.40am. The school gates will open at 8:40 and close promptly at 8:50. Parents will leave their children at the gate and do not need to accompany their children to classrooms.

All pupils should be in their classrooms by 8.50am, the official start of the school day, when the registers are taken. Any pupils arriving after this time must enter through the school office and are recorded as **late**.

## **REWARDS FOR FULL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

At Brookland Junior School we value the commitment of the entire family in ensuring that their child attends school every day. Based on this principle we reward both the child and the family for 100% attendance

For every two weeks of full attendance children will earn one ticket for a prize draw where children will have a chance to win a small prize. At the end of each term there will be a prize draw for that term and families will have the chance to win a family prize for attendance.

At the end of the year all children with 100% punctuality and attendance will be entered into a grand prize draw.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

It is of great importance that children are punctual. Registration usually precedes the teacher outlining the morning's work to the class. Pupils arriving late disturb the class, cause extra work for teaching and administrative staff and have an unsettled start to their own school day. Completed registers are saved on SIMS (Schools Information Management System) at 8:50am.

## **LATE ARRIVALS**

Any pupils arriving late will need to enter school through the main door and sign in, on our electronic sign in system, giving a reason for lateness. Proof of medical appointments may be requested.

When a pupil arrives **after** the register has closed at 8.50, he/she will be marked as **late**. When a pupil arrives after 9.00 am and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as an '**unauthorised absence**' for that session.

## **FOLLOWING UP LATENESS**

Parents whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher. Opportunities and suggestions will be put in place to improve punctuality.

File copies are retained in the child's individual records. If the situation does not improve the Attendance Improvement Officer may become involved.

## **ABSENCES**

Notification must be provided for all absences from school.

- If your child is absent from school for any reason a telephone call to the school office must be made on the morning of absence **before** 8.50am on our designated absence line which is available 24/7.
- Absences are authorised by the designated staff within the school.
- School may decide **not** to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided.

- If the school does not hear from parents / carers explaining the absence then a first response strategy will be used. A member of staff will ring you to find out the reason for absence. Any concerns are reported to the Headteacher.
- If absence is recurring, following a pattern or if there are concerns in general about attendance a meeting will be held with the Headteacher to try and find a resolution.
- Doctor certificates may be requested in long term or recurring sickness.

Registers are kept in electronic format, and are monitored by individual class teachers and fortnightly by the Headteacher, Attendance Improvement Officer and the school office. In the event of a series of unauthorised absence or a pattern of absenteeism being noted, the A.I.O and Headteacher will decide what actions to take next.

### **LEAVING AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

When pupils leave or return to school during the school day, office staff must be notified. Parents must sign their child both in and out of school at the front entrance on our electronic sign in system.

### **REQUESTS FOR HOLIDAYS/SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES ABSENCE IN TERM TIME**

The school WILL NOT authorise family holidays during term time.

In special circumstances a request may be made to the Headteacher at least three weeks before the requested time is planned for.

Parents will need to write a letter to the Headteacher, via the school office and a meeting may be arranged with the Headteacher to discuss the absence from school.

The Headteacher will consider the following before making a decision to authorise the absence:

- the time of year the absence is requested to take place. (Start and end of term, SATs weeks etc. are not encouraged.)
- the attendance record of the child
- the late attendance record of the child
- the number of additional days holiday already taken
- the required progress the child is making in school

### **CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE**

#### ***Authorised Absence***

Absence will be authorised if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or Headteacher of the school').
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause.
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.

- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for any of the following:
  - i) the child's transport to and from school,
  - ii) boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school, and
  - iii) enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home.
- the pupil is the child of traveller parents and the conditions as stated in paragraph 47 of the guidance are met.
- there is a family bereavement.
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit.
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance.
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling).
- leave of absence may be granted by the school for exceptional circumstances where the family have to travel abroad.

### **Warning letters**

The school will issue warning letters when there are concerns regarding attendance.

- In the first instance this will be when attendance has dropped below the national attendance target of 96%
- A second letter will be issued if attendance does not improve and the school will ask for medical proof to authorise any further illnesses. At this stage the school will ask to arrange a meeting with parents and the Headteacher to discuss any issues.

### ***Unauthorised Absence***

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming at all.
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings. (The guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances).
- the pupil is shopping during school hours.
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday).
- the pupil is absent because a sibling is sick.

**NO HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME WILL BE AUTHORISED AND A PENALTY FINE MAY BE SENT TO PARENTS.**

## **ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT OFFICER**

Brookland Junior School works in partnership with the allocated A.I.O. to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school.

The Head teacher meets the A.I.O. on an agreed schedule.

The school works with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the A.I.O. the school will make a formal referral to Children, Schools and Families.

The Attendance Improvement Officers will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, A.I.O.'s may work with children whose absences have been authorised.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason.

## **PENALTY NOTICES**

Where a parent is deemed capable of securing their child's attendance but is not willing to take responsibility to do so, the A.I.O will become involved. Meetings will be arranged to discuss the attendance problems.

After **2** sessions of unauthorised absence a letter will be sent to parents warning of a possible fine.

**15** sessions of unauthorised absence (7½ days) - will trigger proceedings to a penalty notice. Please note that holidays taken in school term time will be **unauthorised**.

The Local Authority issues penalty notices on behalf of Hertfordshire schools to ensure consistency and in the event that a prosecution may need to be brought against the parent(s).

Should you receive a fine for persistent and / or unauthorised absence details are below:

**£60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice.**

**£120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of notice.**

**If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority must prosecute for the offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or withdraw the notice.**

Separate penalty notices will be sent to each parent that has day to day responsibility for bringing their children to school, meaning that **each** parent must pay a **separate** penalty.

Once issued the Headteacher has the discretion to enforce this penalty notice from Herts County Council based on individual circumstances. **The Governors of Brookland Junior School fully support the decision of the Headteacher that once a Penalty notice is issued the Headteacher will not renege on this decision.**

## **PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION**

Parents, pupils, staff and governors are informed of whole school attendance issues and statistics on a regular basis.

Brookland Junior School shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with parents, pupils and staff.

**Updated by Gavin Douglas**

**To be reviewed: April 2019**