



Brookland Junior School
Moving Forward Together

ATTENDANCE POLICY

April 2017

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.
- must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to the school office.
- are expected to be ready to learn.

REGISTRATION

At Brookland Junior School, the pupils are collected from the playground by the teacher at 8.50am.

All pupils should be in their classrooms soon after 8.50am, the official start of the school day, when the registers are taken.

PUNCTUALITY

It is of great importance that children are punctual. Registration usually precedes the teacher outlining the morning's work to the class or the start of the Literacy or Maths lesson. 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 sent to the school office at 9.00am.

LATE ARRIVALS

Any pupils arriving late, will need to access the school through the front door.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' 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 day of absence.
- 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 Head teacher.
- 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 as well as in written format and are monitored by individual class teachers and half termly by the Head teacher, 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 Head teacher 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.

REQUESTS FOR HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

The school WILL NOT authorise family holidays during term time.

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

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

The Head teacher 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 Head teacher 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.

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 WILL 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, AIOs 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.

ATTENDANCE FOR PUPILS

At Brookland Junior School, pupils will receive a "Golden Leaf," if they are present in school every day, on time, each week. Leaves are placed in an attendance box which is kept in classrooms. The more the child is present the more leaves they will acquire.

Each half term, leaves will randomly be chosen from the boxes, where that child will receive an attendance reward and their leaf will go on the attendance tree.

At the end of the year, the children who have 100% attendance will be placed on the tree and awards and certificates presented to the children.

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.

A letter will be sent to parents warning of a possible fine.

6 – 8 unauthorised absences will trigger intervention from the school and the A.I.O. Meetings and an "At Risk" warning letter will be sent in accordance with policy.

21 sessions of unauthorised absences (10 days) - will trigger proceedings to a penalty notice. Please note that holidays taken in school term time will be unauthorised. A warning letter will be sent at this stage informing of a possible fine if absence continues.

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 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice

£120 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

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.

To be reviewed: April 2018