

# Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy

Principal: Mr G.Barlow



## Attendance Policy

If you would like this translated in Urdu, please contact the school office.

آپ اردو ترجمہ میں یہ خط چاہتے ہیں تو، اسکول کے دفتر سے رابطہ کریں۔

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Rationale

To ensure that all pupils at Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy reach their full potential and get the best from their education, every pupil needs to attend school regularly. Regular school attendance is a legal requirement and when a pupil begins their journey at Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy, we ask parents/carers to work with us to achieve good or excellent attendance for their child or children.

## Policy and Procedures

The school and the Local Authority will continue to work closely together to ensure that parent/carers meet their responsibility. Attendance issues are dealt with initially by the school and is then followed by a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if attendance has not improved and/or further advice is required. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) can provide an important link between school and families, provide support/advice to families where needed, but can also invoke statutory action to ensure regular attendance if necessary.

## To further support the Attendance Policy, we:-

- Have clear registration procedures to encourage positive attitudes towards attendance and punctuality and to identify pupils at risk of meeting attendance targets.
- Work with parents/carers to support any of our families with their well-being and any difficulties that may impact upon their child's attendance by enlisting partner agency support where appropriate, for example EWO, the School Nurse, Extended Home School Links Worker.
- Support learning and positive attitudes to behaviour by investigating the barriers to good attendance through 'Attendance Clinics' with the EWO.
- Have developed attendance procedures and supportive systems, to ensure that there is consistency in line with this Attendance Policy.
- Undertake analysis of patterns of absence via regular register checks and half termly attendance reports which are reported to our Local Governing Committee.
- Ask the parents/carers to ensure that up to date contact telephone numbers and any change of address is forwarded to the school office.

## School Attendance

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly, which is vital for children to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that Belgrave offers. Absence from school can affect attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes for pupils. **Please be aware that any unauthorised absences could potentially incur a Fixed Penalty Fine.**

If your child/children are ill, then please contact the school office as soon as possible to inform the school (this may not automatically authorise your child's absence, if their attendance has already dropped below 95% - please see below). **Please note that members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and/or the Extended Home School Links Worker may conduct a home visit if pupils have been absent from school and we have not received a message as to the reason why and we have not been able to make contact with a parents/carers.**

In line with government targets, we aim for our whole school attendance and for the attendance of individual children to be above 95%. If a child's attendance drops below 95% the following steps may be taken:

- 1) A phone call will be made to the parent/carer(s) to make them aware of the drop in attendance and to have a discussion around the reasons for this.

- 2) If the child's attendance continues to fall, parent/carer(s) **may** (depending on government guidance and social distancing rules) be invited to an 'Attendance Clinic' meeting in school to meet with the EWO and a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) – Mrs Martin, Assistant Principal. This meeting is designed to be supportive and to further discuss how we can work together to ensure good attendance is now achieved from this point onwards. If a school meeting is unable to be arranged due to social distancing guidelines, then a further phone call may be made or a doorstep visit from the EWO and member of SLT.
- 3) Following the attendance clinic/phone call/visit, it may have been advised that medical evidence may now be required for any future absences. Without medical evidence, further absences will be unauthorised using the 'O' code in the register. Evidence could include; appointment cards/texts or dated medicines – in the child/children's name and appropriately dated.
- 4) If any further unauthorised absences occur, this could result in a penalty notice warning letter being issued by the school in conjunction with the Local Authority.
- 5) If attendance still fails to improve once the penalty notice warning letter has been sent, a statutory referral will be made by the school for a fixed penalty notice (fine) to be issued by the EWO (the Local Authority) and legal action may be taken.

### **Leave of absence during term-time**

**An important point to note is that we will not be authorising any extended leave (holidays) for the 2023/2024 academic year.** This is a change to our previous attendance policy from 2022 and is intended to keep pupils in school as much as possible following the disruptions of the previous academic year.

The procedures surrounding the leave of absence will be reviewed at the end of the summer term 2023, in preparation for the start of the academic year September 2023.

However, parent/carer(s) **must still apply for a leave of absence** during term time to ensure that the correct absence code is used for a child/children's absence.

**Not completing a form does not avoid the absence being unauthorised, or a fixed penalty fine potentially being issued.**

### **Parents/carers must please work with the school and follow the steps as listed below:**

- 1) An '**Application for leave of absence form during term time**' must be completed **at least four weeks before** the potential absence, which is available for download from the school website or from the school office.
- 2) **A meeting must be arranged** to see or speak with the Extended Home School Links Worker, the EWO and/or a member of SLT to discuss the **potential** leave of absence. Please do this via telephoning the school office (01782 486341).

During the meeting/conversation a number of factors will be discussed, including;

- The impact on achievement the absence could have.
- **That pupils will be taken off roll after 20 school days of absence** and would then need to re-apply for a place at this school, should a place still be available. Please note that pupil places have been lost due to extended leaves of absence exceeding 20 days.
- That the EWO (in accordance with the Local Authority) can potentially issue **a Fixed Penalty Fine if more than 5 days of unauthorised absence has occurred.**

- 3) The planned absence will not be authorised and this will be made clear on the on the '**Application for leave of absence form**' by a nominated member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 4) **A referral form will then be completed for a fixed penalty notice (fine) to be issued at £60 per pupil per parent for any leave exceeding 5 days.**

## **Religious observance**

As a school we recognise our diverse community and in accordance with guidance provided from the Local Authority, we will authorise 1 day per religious observance (with an 'R' code) i.e. Eid. **Any further days of absence directly before or after the designated religious observance day will automatically be unauthorised by the school.** Please note that both authorised and unauthorised affect your child's attendance percentage, however, unauthorised absences can potentially result in further action being taken by the Education Welfare Service.

## **Class Registers**

1. Class teachers are responsible for maintaining an accurate class attendance register (other adults such as Teaching Assistants may complete the register under the teacher's direction).
2. Registers must be completed using the electronic 'Arbor' system and any amendments (i.e. a 'late' mark) will be completed by the school office.
3. The attendance register is marked twice a day at the start of the morning and the beginning of the afternoon. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent. Absences will only be authorised by the school when an explanation has been given by parent/carer(s) (**e.g. 'I01' for illness**). Explanation must be in person, by telephone or Via Class Dojo message on the first day of absence.
4. Correct codes for recording attendance/absence are set out in each register.
5. Pupil attendance at school is 2 sessions per day. Morning (am) is counted as one session and afternoon (pm) is counted as another session. **All registers to be taken and saved by 8.50am for all year groups.**

Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has the responsibility for monitoring attendance and highlighting concerns through regular review meetings with the Extended Home School Links Worker and EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

## **Punctuality and Late Clinics**

Any children arriving after the doors and gates have closed will need to be brought to the main school office by a parent or carer, who will sign them in. The child or children will be marked as 'late' (L), any children arriving after the registers close (9.10am) will be marked as an 'unauthorised late' (U). These codes can affect pupils overall attendance percentage for the academic year and if a number of 'U' codes are accumulated, then the EWO will be notified and legal action may be taken in line with Local Authority guidance.

Our Extended Home School Links Worker (Mrs Jones) conducts daily punctuality/late gates and will speak with parents/carers as to the reasons why a child or children are late. Mrs Jones will also analyse 'late mark' reports from our Arbor registers to build a picture of punctuality across the school and/or with individual children. If a child is consistently late, the following steps and procedures will be followed:

- Parents/carers will be invited by letter to a 'Late Clinic' meeting, and this will be conducted by Mrs Jones, on a Thursday morning.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> invite letter to Late Clinic will be sent.
  - If the 1<sup>st</sup> Late Clinic meeting is non-attended by the parent/carer, LJ will call initially to remind and invite them in that morning. Then a 2<sup>nd</sup> invite letter will be sent and followed up with a phone call to reiterate the meeting.
  - If the 2<sup>nd</sup> Late Clinic meeting is non-attended, an initial call will be made again. Then parents/carers will be invited to an Attendance Clinic meeting with the EWO, Assistant Principal (Mrs Martin) and Mrs Jones (these take place on Tuesday mornings).
- **Persistent late marks can affect a pupil's attendance and can result in further action being taken by the Education Welfare Service, i.e. fixed penalty warning letters and/or fines.**

- If there is still little or no improvement with regards to punctuality (a further 1-2 weeks), then another Attendance Clinic meeting will be held, now with the school Principal present, as well as the EWO and Mrs Jones.
- The final step if punctuality still remains an issue and there has been little or no improvement, further action will then unfortunately need to be taken by the Education Welfare Service and in line with Local Authority guidance. This is something that we would clearly wish to avoid and we would make every effort to work with parents/carers in the first instance, which is evident in the steps that would have already been taken and as noted above.

### **Recording absence and punctuality**

Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy clearly differentiates between authorised and non-authorised absence. An absence is only authorised when the reason (illness, bereavement and religious observation) can be seen as a genuine explanation of the absence.

Every half term the school is required to submit details of Persistent Absence to the EWO. We are required to inform them of how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absences. Children are classed as Persistent Absentees if their attendance is below 90%. This is recorded as a percentage attendance and is used as an overall guide to the school's success in promoting good attendance and punctuality.

### **Appointments**

**All medical, dental and other appointments must be made out of school time.** In order to reduce the amount of adults on site we ask that medical/dental appointments are NOT made in school time. This way, the children's learning is not disrupted and we do not have any more adults on site than is absolutely necessary. Please note that if this happens it may affect your child's attendance figure and in some cases may be noted as unauthorised if evidence is not provided (i.e. a hospital letter or appropriately prescribed medication).

### **The following forms part of this policy:**

- Parents/carers will ensure that their child will attend every session unless there is a genuine illness.
- **It is essential that parents/carers also agree to contact school with a reason for their child's absence on the day of absence (and each day thereafter).** This is extremely important to ensure that the correct code is entered into the register for that child/children. If a reason is not provided, the absence will be noted on the register as unauthorised and home visits may take place if we have not been able to make contact with the parents/carers of that pupil or pupils.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 95%, parents/carers may be contacted by either the Extended Home School Links Worker, a member of SLT or the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the reasons for absence and any support that is required and deemed necessary.
- Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence in order for these absences to be authorised. Evidence will be requested until attendance exceeds 90%.

Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy will support parents/carers and pupils wherever possible to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Parents/carers are welcome to contact the school office, Mrs Martin or Mrs Jones, if they have any attendance concerns or questions regarding attendance and/or this Attendance Policy.

**Date:** September 23

**Review Date:** September 2024 (or earlier if deemed necessary and according to guidance changes).

## Appendix 1 – The Avenue St. Barts

The Avenue St. Barts will follow slightly different steps due to the nature of its setting as a SEN provision for pre-school pupils with varying complex and high level needs. The basis of this appendix stems from the Belgrave St. Bartholomew's Academy Attendance Policy and will be referred to as and when appropriate. However, the following guidelines have been put in place specifically for The Avenue St. Barts.

### Attendance Steps

- Mrs Jones (Extended Home School Links Worker) will work closely with Mrs Spencer (Lead Teacher and Assistant Principal) to work with parents/carers initially, running 'meet and greet' and 'social sessions' to build relationships with the parents and the families. During these sessions informal discussions will take place (as appropriate) regarding issues/concerns surrounding attendance and information will be provided as necessary.
- If a pupil's attendance is causing concern, then a discussion/meeting/home visit will take place with Assistant Principal/Lead Teacher and the Extended Home School Links Worker. This step may be taken on up to three occasions.
- If during the course of the academic year a pupil's attendance continues to be a serious concern and all of the steps above have been taken, then a more formal meeting may be arranged with Julia Turner (EWO) also present.

### Register Codes

- Any pupils who are missing from the setting and where no reason has been provided by a parent/carer, a member of staff will contact the parent/carer to ascertain why the pupil is absent. An appropriate code will then be given to record the absence on Arbor.
- The use of absence codes are used exclusively at the discretion of the setting, primarily the Lead Teacher (Assistant Principal) at The Avenue. However, some guidelines have been agreed and put into place:
  - If attendance falls below 95%, then parents/carers may be contacted by the Assistant Principal/Lead Teacher or the Extended Home School Links Worker, to explore the absences further. At this point, medical evidence **may be required** for any further absences to ensure an 'I01' code for illness is used.
  - If attendance does then fall below 90%, medical evidence **will then be required** to mark an absence with the 'I01' code. Medical evidence would include in date and appropriately named prescriptions, appointment/medical cards/texts, medical letters etc. Any absences where evidence is not provided will be marked as 'O' (unauthorised).
  - C codes (other authorised absences for extenuating circumstances) are used **ONLY** at the discretion of the Senior Leadership Team.
  - Staff are always advised to contact Belgrave or Mrs Martin for further advice on codes or attendance issues.

### Extended Leaves

- All extended leaves of absence for the academic year 2021-2022 will be unauthorised and a G code will be used on the register for such absences.
- Please refer to the steps and information listed in the above main policy, outlining applications for extended leaves.
- For pupils of The Avenue and in order to cater for the diverse needs of the pupils (i.e. visiting crowded places, medical needs etc.), it has been agreed with the Senior Leadership Team that although ALL extended leaves will be unauthorised, no fixed penalty fines will be issued for an extended leave. However, if the leave were to exceed 20 days, then the pupil may potentially be off rolled from the register.

- If a further (i.e. second) extended leave is taken in the same academic year, this would then automatically be unauthorised again (using the G code) and a fixed penalty fine will be issued, regardless of the number of days taken (i.e. for 1 day).
- Parents/carers are always welcome and encouraged to discuss any planned extended leaves or any concerns/questions surrounding leave with the Assistant Principal/Lead Teacher, Mrs Spencer.

### **Communication**

- Any information or conversations relating to attendance must be recorded on CPOMS. This is imperative to ensure clear communication takes place and also an evidence trail is generated.
- The Avenue's Lead Teacher (Assistant Principal) will monitor this to ensure records are accurate and up to date.

**Date:** September 23

**Review Date:** September 24 *(or earlier if deemed necessary and according to guidance changes).*