

Broad Square Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Copies of this policy are available in a range of formats upon request via the school office

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Updated on:	Changes made / notes:
February 2019	Changes made to reflect the Liverpool Model Policy Addition of link to Public Health for Childhood Illnesses
July 2019	Addition of governor panels Addition of information regarding police welfare calls
April 2022	Addition of Study Bugs information Addition of rewards section Updated overall guidance

Signed (Headteacher)

Signed (Chair of Governors)

V. Corbett
P. O'Donnell

1.0 Introduction

Broad Square Primary School recognises the clear link between the attendance and achievement of pupils. The aim of this policy, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils within Broad Square Primary School to support learning and development.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. ***As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.***

Broad Square Primary School believes Teachers, Parents, Carers, Pupils and all members of the school and the community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality ensuring pupils attend to achieve. This Policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document.

2.0 Aims

- Maximise the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality at Broad Square Primary School.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent and raise the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community.
- Provide support advice and guidance for parents, pupils and staff.
- Develop clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registration for pupils.
- Ensure a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data.
- Ensure a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies.
- Continue to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.
- Ensure an inclusive environment in school for parents and carers to work in partnership to ensure excellent school attendance and achievement for all pupils.

2.1 Promoting regular Attendance at Broad Square Primary School:

This is everyone's responsibility, all members of staff, parent/carers and pupils.

To help us all focus on this, Broad Square Primary School will ensure:

- Appropriate interventions are in place to improve punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Pupils are provided with appropriate support to minimise absence from school. This includes Broad Square Primary School and multi-agency provision as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, disadvantaged and Looked After pupils and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously.
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of pupils' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Excellent attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular incentives.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with pupils in class and at assemblies.

3.0 Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child not attending school regularly is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required, and where possible appropriately evidenced.

From September 2021 school will adopt a robust attendance strategy in order to maintain primary attendance targets of **97%** thus ensuring all children reach their full potential through excellent attendance and punctuality throughout the school year:

During each half term if your child/children incurs three days unauthorised absence, parents or guardians will be required to meet with Inclusion Officer at school, if this is not attended, a home visit will be conducted by our Inclusion Officer,

If unauthorised absence persists, after five days a 20 day fixed penalty warning period will commence, if this is breached, a fixed penalty fine will be requested in accordance with Local Authority guidance and/or policy if no evidence to support the absence is submitted.

If your child/children have 5 days or more illness related absence and this is not evidenced by appropriate means, it will be unauthorised and will also incur a 20 day fixed penalty warning period. In these instances it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide this evidence, if there is any further excessive and sporadic illness related absence, parents will be advised to meet with school nurse during half term attendance reviews.

School will also be holding attendance panels with School Nurse Sue Barratt, to address excessive illness related absence that is not appropriately evidenced. We are aware that the pandemic has given rise to excessive illness related absence and other associated issues, however we are striving to bridge the gap in learning lost during this period

As overall attendance is reviewed on a weekly basis it is imperative that it is coded accurately in order to prevent discrepancies in individual registration certificates and to ensure all absence is appropriately recorded in respect of safeguarding procedures.

As there can only be two fixed penalty fines issued in any one given school year, if your child/children has persistent absence that is both excessive and unauthorised, a referral to Education Welfare Services will be made to initiate legal proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

School attendance is positively supported where possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. Broad Square Primary School has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor attendance and punctuality, a register is taken in both morning and afternoon and is coded accordingly.

3.1 Expectations of Parent/Carer

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

- Ensure your child arrives for school on time.
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.
- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours and are evidenced.
- Contact school preferably by 8.30 am on the first day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school.
- If a phone call is received as a result of your child's absence it is important that you respond to this to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact the Inclusion Officer if the reason for absence requires a more personal discussion.

- **In case of emergency** we need up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As a school we request a minimum of two emergency contact details be provided)
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be in writing to the Headteacher and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Reasons such as a close family bereavement or taking part in a significant religious event would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school, include general holidays, weddings, shopping, concerts and birthdays. Absence Forms can be requested from the school reception.

3.2 If a pupil is absent we will

- Telephone the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.30 am.
- If no response is received and the absence is unauthorised a member of school staff may conduct a home visit. If there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent/carer will be invited to meet the Inclusion Officer.
- If absences persist the Inclusion Officer will take appropriate action, this may include a discussion with the Liverpool Education Authority Education Welfare Officer.

4.0 Understanding types of Absence

Broad Square Primary School has to record every absence that a pupil takes from school and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by calling the school on the first day of absence and in writing on the pupil's return.

If your child/children have excessive and/ or sporadic illness related absence that is not evidenced appropriately, parents will be required to meet with school nurse to access appropriate medical support and advice, in some cases support can be given in making necessary referrals in respect of your child health, which impacts on their ability to maintain regular attendance of **97%**.

There is appropriate medical advice available with reference to childhood illnesses etc for all parents/guardians to seek:

Useful links:

- Gov.uk <https://www.gov.uk/>
- Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>
- Department for Education <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>
- Health and Safety Executive <https://www.hse.gov.uk/>

4.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, or evidence to support the reason submitted, then absences cannot be authorised. It is the Headteacher, not parents who make the decision to authorise absence from school.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes but is not exclusive to:

- Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- Absences which have not been explained.
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get their mark.

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September 2018 Broad Square Primary School can issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 schools days. If the child has any unauthorised absence during this time the school will refer to case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

4.3 Persistent Absence

Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%.

This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.

A pupil who is persistently absent is one who misses 10% or more of their schooling for **ANY REASON**, from the beginning of the school year to the end of any given half term period as indicated below:

- Parents/carers are responsible to ensure pupil attendance and punctuality, school can support this in many ways.
- Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.
- Parent/Carers are asked to contact the Inclusion Officer in the first instance.
- Below is a table which sets out current thresholds for Persistent Absence and can be referred to as a means of determining the amount of sessions missed to meet this criteria:

TERMS	PERS ABSENCE AT 10%	NO OF DAYS OFF SCHOOL
SEP TO OCTOBER	7 OR MORE SESSIONS	3.5 DAYS
SEP TO CHRISTMAS	14 OR MORE SESSIONS	7 DAYS
SEP TO FEBRUARY	20 OR MORE SESSIONS	10 DAYS
SEP TO EASTER	25 OR MORE SESSIONS	12.5 DAYS
SEP TO MAY	31 OR MORE SESSIONS	15.5.DAYS

5.0 Why Regular Attendance is very important:

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning. Pupils who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

- 90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

6.0 The Inclusion Officer (IO)

- The Inclusion Officer – provides support for parents/carer and advice on problems relating to attendance, and encourages good communications between home and school.
- The IO will always try to resolve the situation by agreement with the family but, if a resolution cannot be achieved to improve the pupil's attendance and where unauthorised absence persists the IO will be required to give consideration to the instigation of legal proceedings which include; Penalty Notices, Parental Prosecution and Education Supervision Orders. Details regarding attendance law, penalty fines and legal interventions are available from the Local Authority.
- The Inclusion Officer works robustly with First Response every day when an absence occurs, if a pattern emerges of persistent poor attendance, action will be taken.
- The pandemic has given rise to poor patterns of attendance, a lot of which is excessive and not appropriately evidenced, therefore cannot be authorised. As a result of this many consultations have taken place locally and nationally to improve current poor attendance patterns which will be tackled using health and government targets and strategies to address the problem. The Inclusion Officer, in partnership with senior Leadership and the Local Authority will prioritise this as the gap to learning has widened since March 2020 as a result of children not accessing education and learning in school.
- Broad Square Primary School will develop a strict attendance approach with families who have been persistently absent prior to pandemic and over the last two years.

7.0 Leave of absence in Term Time

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Pupils absent for 10 or more sessions (5 school days) will incur a fixed penalty fine of up to £60.00 per parent per child to be paid within 21 days, if not this will increase to £120.00 until day 28.

8.0 Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving pupils disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can encourage future absence.

Broad Square Primary School will be reviewing persistent punctuality and parents will be informed via letter and may be required to attend a meeting at school with Inclusion Officer if a pupil is late more than 10 times over any given half term.

8.1 How we manage lateness

The school day starts and registers are taken at 9.05 am (Key Stage 2) 9.10 am (Key Stage 1 and Reception) by the class teacher and pupils receive a late mark if they are not in their class by that time. School recommends that pupils arrive by 8.55 am (Key Stage 2) or 9.00 am (Key Stage 1 and Reception) Late arrival to school following the close of registers is classified as an absence. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice.

If a Parent/Carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the Inclusion Officer who will offer support to resolve the problem.

9.0 People Responsible for Attendance Matters at Broad Square Primary School

All school staff, parents/carers and pupils need to work as a team to support the attendance and achievement of pupils. This continued support therefore is vital in making every pupil's journey through school a success.

Broad Square Primary School have recently signed up to **Studybugs** which we encourage all parents to be part of, it helps schools look after their pupils by taking a simpler, whole school approach to pastoral care, maximum wellbeing, health and attendance thus minimising stress. The primary focus is to provide a unique communication platform for children's health, used by thousands of schools and parents across the UK in partnership with NHS and other public health organisations.

If not already, can you get the free Studybugs app or register on the Studybugs website, you can use this to tell us if your child is ill an unable to attend school. It can provide you with official guidance from Public Health England on the need to stay off school based on the symptoms you enter.

Get the app or register now (<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>)

10.0 Rewards

Good school attendance is celebrated in several different ways here at Broad Square Primary School.

- Attendance is always a key priority during our weekly Friday assembly. Within this assembly we celebrate our weekly first, second and third place class winners
- Any class who achieves over 97% is given a Mr Potato Head piece each week, which equates to a class prize on completion.
- Individual attendance certificates are given every half term for pupils at 97% and above.
- Attendance is celebrated via text, newsletter and social media platforms.
- Half-termly 100% attendance draw. Prizes for this draw have included a micro scooter, Pokémon cards and various different games.
- We hold a termly attendance draw for £50, £30 and £20 ASDA vouchers, pupils must have 97% attendance to qualify.

11.0 Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

As a school we are now required to:

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- Give the Inclusion Officer or Administration comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a **child missing in education**. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Appendices – *working towards best practice*

Attendance and Punctuality Roles and Responsibilities Guidance

Whole School Approach

When	Whom	Actions Expected
DAILY	Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive on school site by 8.50 am, however classroom is open 8.30am. • Be in class on time for registration at 8.55 am (Key Stage 2) 9.00 am (Key Stage 1 and Reception)
	Class Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registers are completed on SIMS each day on time • Ensure attendance has a high profile in class • Discuss absence with pupils returning to school • Welcoming long-term absentees back into the class • Informal discussions with identified pupils to follow up attendance issues and agree future action required.
	Administration Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring staff have completed AM/PM registers • Ensuring input of accurate attendance marks in the register via SIMS • Identify pupils who are absent from school without reason (before 0930) • Log on SIMS, parental voicemails, text messages and emails regarding student absences • Ensure all Late arriving pupils are spoken to and their attendance is entered on to SIMS • SIMS in touch messages sent to parent/carers who have failed to contact regarding their child's absence and also pupils who arrive late. • First day absence phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no text message/phone call has been returned. • SLT and class teachers contacted with specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required • Supporting staff with registration queries, support the interventions of the class teachers. • Logging attendance of all pupils going out /in school for medical, dental or visits • Daily liaison with other settings for pupils educated off site to ensure AM and PM registers are provided within set time parameters and pupils who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the First Day contact systems. • Daily Late process, log and send actions for relevant staff. • Daily Attendance/ PA report sent to senior leader with responsibility for attendance.
	Inclusion Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding home visits as required. • Focused casework interventions with persistent absence pupils and families. • Phone call contact with pupils/parent/carers • Home visits • Instigation of legal proceedings • Tracking of actions and interventions and feedback to pastoral staff.
	Senior Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and tracking of staff not completing registers in line with • Safeguarding requirements. • Liaison with EWO, Pastoral staff and Curriculum Leaders regarding support work with identified pupils

When	Whom	Actions Expected
WEEKLY	Class teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all members of the class know the school target and their current attendance • Discuss punctuality issues with identified pupils and parent/carers • Pupils rewards • Organise help for pupils to catch up on missed work due to prolonged absence
	Administration Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing SLT and EWO of pupil patterns of absence. • Provide weekly pupil attendance figures for class teachers and pupil rewards • Provide weekly Punctuality data for class teacher
	Inclusion Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of pupils who are regularly absent should be forward initially to the subject leaders • Monitor/follow up identified pupil absence by making contact with parent/carers where appropriate.
	Senior Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Tracking of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements. • Liaison with IO, Pastoral Coordinators and class teachers regarding support work with identified pupils • Update information on attendance boards

When	Whom	Actions Expected
HALF TERMLY	Senior Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a high profile of attendance as a significant contributor to pupil achievement • Use attendance data to identify and take action to improve the attendance of vulnerable pupils • Ensure that all teaching staff focus on attendance in planning and pedagogy
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that attendance features in ALL parents evenings • Monitor and track attendance/PA Action Plans • Liaise with IO to share information and agree joint actions re action plans or other pupils causing concern

TERMLY	Senior Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of attendance is underpinned by awareness of safeguarding issues for all pupils both in school and those at off site provision • School Attendance Review alongside the IO • Ensure that attendance is given a high profile as a key driver of school improvement and provide support and guidance to SLT, for plans to raise attendance • Ensure that the attendance policy is implemented across the school and that systems are operating effectively. • Report to SLT on attendance matters • Ensure school prospectus, parent/carers welcome booklet and school newsletters promote attendance
	Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that attendance maintains a high profile as a key driver of school improvement through close monitoring and scrutiny of attendance data in conjunction with SLT and Governors

9.0 Table of Escalation of Interventions

Attendance %	RAG	Intervention	Lead Responsibility
100% Attendance is Excellent		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewards and Praise 	Class Teacher Pastoral Staff Senior Leader
99% - 97% Attendance is Good		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewards and Encouragement 	Class Teacher Pastoral Staff Senior Leader
96% - 90% Attendance is a Concern		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to pupils & contact parent/carers 5 minute meetings Return to school discussions Safe and well safeguarding visits Early intervention IO Persistent absence warning letters 	Class Teacher Pastoral Staff Senior Leader EWO
Below 90% Attendance is a Serious Concern		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular next action planning Meetings Safe and well safeguarding visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plans Legal intervention 	Senior Leader Pastoral staff Governors EWO

School Improving Student Attendance – flow chart

