



Belleville Wix Academy

Attendance Policy

First agreed	Summer 2019 with effect from Autumn 2019
Reviewed	Autumn 2020
Review date	Summer 2022

This policy outlines procedures operating in Belleville Wix Academy to monitor the attendance of pupils. It provides a basis for evidence, should the need arise, for children to be referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

It aims to complement the local authority and Q1E Attendance Policy & Procedures.

Rationale

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential components of a child's education. In order to make the most of the learning opportunities provided within school, children need to have the continuity of provision which consistent attendance allows.

Aims

- To promote excellent attendance and reduce absence.
- To encourage prompt arrival at school.
- To ensure that routines are in place for monitoring attendance and for early identification of any difficulties.

Objectives of the policy

- Ensure pupils attend school for the maximum number of days.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- To do all we can to meet the government attendance targets.

This policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

Why do we need a policy?

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

a) to age, ability and aptitude and

b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the school's Local Authority (LA) and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's Attendance Policy as any absence will impact on a child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
 - **Unauthorised Absence:** when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.
- When a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.
 - Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.
 - Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences may result in a request to obtain medical evidence from the doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date-stamped compliment slip confirming your visit or prescription or medicine. Any of the above must be shown to a member of the school office. *(Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)*
 - There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
 - The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school, the Trust and the Local Authority.

Encouraging good attendance and punctuality

It is important to remember that the vast majority of children at BWA arrive on time and every day. An important part of our attendance policy is that this good practice is commended and applauded publicly. In order to do this we:-

- Publish class attendance on a weekly basis in the school Newsletter.
- Reward the class with the highest weekly attendance.
- Celebrate 100% attendance for each term and the school year.

Responsibilities

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- supporting the school in making attendance a high priority and ensure that children are receiving messages about the value of education.
- ensuring that the child in their care arrive punctually, prepared for the school day, between 8:30am – 8.45am and on a Wednesday at 12:45pm for nursery pupils attending the second half of the week.
- encouraging regular school attendance and being aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensuring that in the event of late arrival, their child goes directly to the office.
- ensuring that they contact the school on the first day of any absence.
- requesting leave as far in advance as possible.
- making applications for leave in writing on the school's **'leave of absence form,' which are available from the school office,** giving the reason for the request.
- working with the school, and Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and other professionals, to improve lateness and attendance.
- avoiding medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- addressing concerns about their child's attendance at school by:
 - ✓ talking to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving.
 - ✓ talking to their child's class teacher in the first instance.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS)

The Education Welfare Service strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

The process for monitoring attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond by taking the steps below:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by the close of registration (9:10am), the school will endeavour to contact them that day. A call will be made asking them to call the office to report the reason for absence. Should a response not be received from the call, a text will be made by 10:00am.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If, by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, it will be passed to the phase leader for that key stage, who will decide on the appropriate action.
- Children's attendance is monitored carefully throughout the year by the school and the EWO. When attendance falls below 95% by the end of the first half term, a letter is sent home, or a phone call made, to the parents informing them that their child's attendance is being monitored. Parents may be invited to attend a School Attendance Panel.
- Teachers and Senior Leaders will also speak with families if attendance is a concern to offer support to improve attendance or punctuality.
- Termly School Attendance Panels are set up by the school. Parents are invited to attend the panel to discuss their child's attendance and ways in which it could be improved.
- If lateness or absence is persistent, a referral will be made to the EWS who will support and advise the parent/carer and the school, with a review to resolving any difficulties and improving punctuality.
- Late Slips are given to children who arrive at school after the door has closed at 8:45am. All pupils arriving after this time must report to the office. Late Slips are monitored carefully to highlight patterns.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

Absences during term time

The school term dates are published on the school website and regularly in the weekly newsletter..

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

“ ... Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.”

As of 1st September 2013, the rate per parent per child will be £60 if paid within 21 days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

If the penalty notice is not paid, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court and, if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. Holidays must be taken during school holidays.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite. During the pandemic different times for the start of day may be in place. Any pupil arriving after their allotted slot will be late.

- Children must be in school between 8:30am – 8:45am each day 12:45 for nursery in the afternoon.
- Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time.
- The school doors for soft start will be shut at 8:45am. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be given a late slip. Lateness will be monitored.
- At 9:10 am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be at school, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a **Penalty Notice** if the problem persists. All "lates" after the close of the register will be coded as 'U' i.e. unauthorised.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher, deputy head or assistant head to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child/children in their care to a different school that they inform BWA staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and confirmed:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next.
- The name and address of the new school.
- The new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will be sent on by request from the new school. If the school has not received the above information, the family will be referred to the EWS.

Children at Risk of Missing Education

We will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who may need to be taken off the schools register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education.

- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school.
- have been permanently excluded.

When the Local Authority agree to the pupil being taken off the roll, the school will complete this action.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550499/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_Part_1.pdf

Parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices

The Local Authority and school have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. In addition to using these powers, the Local Authority and school can develop other practices to improve attendance.

School Attendance Orders

If it appears to the Local Authority that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, then they will begin procedures for issuing a School Attendance Order. The order will require the child's parents to register their child at a named school. If they fail to comply with the order the parent can be prosecuted.

Prosecutions by local authorities

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at school or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority. Only the Local Authority can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs.

Local Authorities have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school (section 444 of the Education Act 1996)¹³.

Section 444 has two separate but linked offences - Section 444 (1), where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and Section 444 (1A), where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. Section 444 applies the offence to where parents fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the Local Authority or Governing Body has arranged alternative provision. There are statutory defences for parents to use under the 1996 Act.

The fines available to the courts if parents are found guilty of the Section 444 (1) offence include a level 3 fine of up to £1,000. If they are found guilty of the Section 444 (1A) the fine is at level 4, up to £2,500 and the court can also sentence them to imprisonment for up to three months. The Local Authority has the power to prosecute parents of pupils found in a public place during school hours after being excluded from school. The fine is a level 3 fine of up to £1,000.

Parenting contracts

A parenting contract is a formal written signed agreement between parents and either the local authority or the school which contains:

- a statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract.
- a statement by the local authority or school agreeing to provide specified support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract.

Parenting contracts can be used in cases of misbehaviour or irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. Parenting contracts are voluntary but any non-compliance will be recorded by the school or Local

Authority and may be used as evidence in court where an application is made for a behaviour parenting order.

The Local Authority or school should fund any support required to implement a parenting contract (such as referral to parenting classes) and provide information to parents about other types of support available, such as details of national and local agencies and helplines.

Parenting orders

Parenting orders are imposed by the court and the parent's agreement is not required before an order is made. Parenting orders are available as an 'ancillary order' following a successful prosecution by the Local Authority for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

Penalty notices

Penalty notices are fines imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.

Penalty notices can only be issued by the Headteacher or someone authorised by them, a Local Authority officer or the police. The school and the police must send copies of penalties issued to the Local Authority. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalty notices can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalty notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the LGB, Headteacher and the Quality First Education Trust.

Updates

In light of government focus on attendance, changes are happening quite quickly. Any advice given by the LA or DfE will be followed should guidance change after this policy has been agreed and without prior notice to parents.

Guidance used to review this policy - DfE document 'School Attendance' – September 2018