

Brine Leas School

An Academy

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

PRINCIPLES

Outstanding attendance and punctuality at school facilitates and outstanding education and job/career prospects and minimises the risks of students being drawn into anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse. Children's social skills are also enhanced by regular attendance.

AIMS

- to share the responsibility for promoting outstanding school attendance amongst everyone in Brine Leas School and the broader school community; to develop and implement an effective attendance policy which will encourage some students to attend school more regularly by the implementation of specific measures, e.g.
 - i. registering students accurately and efficiently;
 - ii. contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
 - iii. regularly monitoring student attendance and punctuality;
 - iv. reporting school attendance statistics to parents, LA and DfE as appropriate.
 - v. regularly challenging students over lateness to school and intervening, to improve punctuality;
- to reinforce good attendance and to encourage improved attendance by using such measures as issuing attendance certificates to students who attain 100% attendance each half term as well as other rewards such as attendance merits and celebration breakfasts.
- to monitor and evaluate this policy and its implementation by, amongst other means, rigorously collecting and analysing data about attendance to check our progress against measurable outcomes, e.g. National targets

SECTION 1 - ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENTS:

All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the primary statutory responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES:

To help fulfil their important role in their child's education, parents must:

- *ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;*
- *notify the Main Office if their child cannot attend for any reason – this is for the child's security as well as administrative reasons;*

- *work with the school and education welfare service to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence;*
- *ensure they obtain 'leave of absence' for their child if required during term time.*

To discharge their agreed responsibilities parents should always:

- encourage good attendance making sure that their child goes to school regularly, arrives on time and keeps to the school's rules on attending all lessons;
- take an interest in their child's school work;
- make sure their child understands that the parents do not approve of absence from school;
- support the school in its efforts to control less than outstanding behaviour;
- inform the school on the first day of non-attendance;
- co-operate with school staff and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to make sure their child overcomes his or her attendance problems and receives an education;
- discuss planned absences with the school and apply for permission well in advance (at least one month's notice)
- Parents should not normally:
 - i. expect the school to agree to shopping trips during school hours;
 - ii. take their own family holidays outside of the school holidays;
 - iii. take their own family holidays during exam or test time;

STUDENTS:

- i. Students are actively encouraged to attend school regularly and to arrive punctually at school and at the start of lessons.
- ii. Students should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence, e.g. bullying, racism, etc.
- iii. Students should pass on absence notes from parents to their progress tutor and to pass school correspondence to their parents.

THE SCHOOL:

BLS will put systems in place to work towards preventing truancy. The Pastoral team must be alerted by the main office/attendance officer/support staff/teaching staff if a student truants and a member of the team will contact parents and the necessary agencies. Early warning of attendance problems will normally be to the LA where the student attends school, but any necessary legal action is the responsibility of the LA where the child lives.

It is the duty of parents to meet their statutory responsibilities either by registering the child at a school or by making other effective educational arrangements. If a child is registered as a student at a particular school, that school must give permission for a child to be absent. If a child does not go to the school at which he or she is registered, the relevant LA can take legal action against the parents.

LAs' legal powers to enforce attendance are:-

- **School Attendance Orders** – these enforce the parents' responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive suitable education;

- **Prosecution** for irregular attendance - this can result in parents being fined up to £1000 for each child who is not going to school. (FPN will be issued). For unauthorised absence in term time (for example taking a holiday) a fine of £60 can be imposed. If the fine is not paid within 21 days it will rise to £120.
- **Parenting Orders** – these are court orders which require certain actions to be taken by parents with the purpose of improving student attendance, e.g. parents may be required to attend counselling or guidance sessions or to ensure that their child is escorted to and from school.
- **Education Supervision Orders** - this means that the court appoints a supervisor to help and give advice to the parents and the child.

The school will endeavour to communicate with partner primary schools, when there is a known sibling link, with regard to leave of absence requests.

The school will work with attendance officers or EWOs to monitor school attendance and to help parents meet their responsibilities. They will monitor students absent from school with illness (I) as the reason and when a student has ten sessions of these types of absences a letter will be sent home requesting medical evidence for this period. If evidence cannot be provided then these absences could potentially be classed as unauthorised absence and receive O code. School will also monitor unauthorised absences and if a student receives ten sessions of unauthorised absence, be it in one period of time, or in a pattern or sporadically spread, parents could be issued with FPN. Parents will be invited into to school to discuss this issue before the penalty is issued by the EWO. See attached pathway.

The EWO/Attendance Officer for Brine Leas School is Glen Haag who is responsible for the attendance of all the students in the school. Where a child lives in a neighbouring LA, follow-up action will require co-operative working with the relevant EWS. Any necessary legal action is the responsibility of the LA where the child is domicile. The school will also 'contract in' additional support to check on current practice and to advise where appropriate.

The Attendance Officer should check registers regularly to ensure that they are being completed in accordance with the school's policy and to identify any patterns of absence which have not already been notified. The Attendance Officer promptly follows up incidents where the staff have identified a possible attendance problem. The Attendance Officer should work closely with Progress Managers/Pastoral Team and families to resolve attendance issues, arranging home visits where necessary.

THE GOVERNING BODY:

The governing body is legally responsible for many aspects of school management including the attendance register and so it is registered with Data Protection Regulations. However, the Headteacher manages the day-to-day running of the school and in so doing takes responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy.

THE HEADTEACHER:

Headteachers are required to tell the LA if a student fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of 15 days and the absence is treated as unauthorised or a part timetable. This done by completing a CME or CMOOE form from the Local Authority.

Headteachers can, of course, notify the LA earlier if there are areas of concern but the initial contact with the LA will be made with the EWO/Attendance Officer. Normally Brine Leas School's staff will have made and recorded efforts to address the non-attendance through:

- action by the Progress Tutor, as part of their day-to-day duties;
- involvement of others within the school, e.g. Progress Managers, Headteacher, Deputy Head or Assistant Head;
- contact with parents.

Referral to the EWO would normally take place if:

- our own systems and measures are exhausted and we are looking to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Two registers will be kept:

- an admission register (known as the school roll) which contains a list of all students at the school;
- an attendance register for all students of compulsory school age on the admission register. This must be taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. This does not mean that students aged 16+ do not need to be registered because good health and safety practice requires that the school needs to know who is on the premises. No student in Year 7, 8, 9 & 10 is normally allowed to leave the school premises at lunch time.

Each year, Brine Leas School will submit to the DfE details of the level of absence within the school. The report details how many half days missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence.

PROGRESS TUTOR (PASTORAL STAFF):

Progress tutors and pastoral staff must enforce this policy rigidly. If a student is absent without explanation when the register is called, parents will be contacted via the electronic 'Truancy Call' system. If an appropriate reply is not received an absence sheet is placed in the Progress Tutor's register (daily) to seek a response on the cause of absence.

SUBJECT TEACHERS:

When a student is missing from their lesson for no apparent reason subject teachers should inform a member of the pastoral team (preferably the child's Progress Manager) via the school office so that the student's absence can be further investigated. Subject teachers can also contribute to the reduction of unauthorised absence by delivering interesting and engaging lessons and insisting on punctuality for themselves, colleagues and students.

POLICE:

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the police now have powers to remove truants found in public places and to return them either to their schools or a place designated by the LA.

SECTION 2 - INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE RATES

There are many reasons why students miss school without permission and therefore there is no one solution to the problem of absenteeism. For example setting reward schemes, such as certificates, school trips, attendance merits and attendance breakfasts.

Other helpful initiatives include:

- implementing first day contact with parents of children who are absent from school without prior knowledge. It is hoped that this sends a clear signal to students and parents that absence is a matter of concern and will be followed up. This is done via 'Trunancy Call'.
- encouraging attendance checks, scheduled or unscheduled, which is effective in monitoring post registration truancy;
- having an attendance officer responsible for attendance;
- a single school management computer system (Bromcom) which stores accessible student profiles containing a full range of information from both the existing electronic attendance system and the school management system. This school management system:
 - i. is accessible to all subject teachers, Progress Managers, Heads of Department and members of the SLT;
 - ii. enables staff to have access to a complete student profile in reviewing non-academic achievements and events of a disciplinary nature as well as students academic performance;
 - iii. enables staff to interrogate data and produce ICT generated management information and reports;
 - iv. enables staff to record disciplinary and other events electronically and have no need to make paper records.

SECTION 3 - KEEPING THE REGISTER

Registers should be treated as legal documents – indeed they may be used as evidence in court cases. For this reason they should be retained for a minimum of three years. For each student, the register must be marked either as present or absent. If the student is absent, the register **must** clearly differentiate between whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised by the school.

Authorised Absence:

Authorised absence is absence with permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of Brine Leas School- this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health. A written notification will normally be issued to the parents.

Unauthorised Absence:

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school - this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

N.B. Authorised absences are equivalent to 'present' for performance table purposes. Even when students are engaged in Approved Educational Activity off-site, they must not be marked as present, as good health and safety practice requires that the school needs to know who is on the premises in the case of a fire drill or a real emergency. In the case of a student leaving school during a session and/or returning later, care must be taken to maintain the accuracy of who is known to be on site in the case of an emergency – for this reason pencil annotations can be used.

All registers (either manual or on computer) must allow for the original entry and any subsequent correction to be clearly distinguishable and that, on retrieval, they appear in chronological order. The attendance register must be printed at least once a month. They must be retained for at least three years.

MARKING OF ELECTRONIC REGISTERS

The Student Registration Forms are placed in the register. The Paper register is in case of fire and care should be taken filling it in. Bromcom should be also used for registration purposes.

As you are aware the E.W.O./School has the power to take parents to court over non-attendance at school. Parents might contest this, so we must take prompt action and keep accurate records.

Procedures for completion of the absence sheet:

Absence Report Forms will be provided to Tutors with the absent students for the previous week printed on them with the dates and times of absence.

ABSENCE CODES (Key to the codes on the bottom of each form)

/	Present		
U	Late (after registration closed)	B	Educated off site
C	Other authorised circumstance	E	Excluded
H	Annual family holiday (only in exceptional circumstances)		
J	Attending Interview		
M	Medical/Dental	\$	Staff only
N	No reason yet provided	O	Unauthorised circumstances
P	Approved sporting activity	L	Late (authorised)
S	Study leave	V	Educational visit
W	Work Experience	Y	Enforced closure
#	Holiday	Z	Pupil not on role

If a student is late (after registration is closed) for an acceptable reason (e.g. bus broke down, medical or dental appointment etc.) do not use code U (which is unauthorised) - codes such as M count as though the student was absent for the whole session.

N.B. the following codes represent unauthorised absences and must be reported to the appropriate Head of House.

O	-	Unauthorised Circumstances (Truancy)
U	-	Late after reg. Closed (Truancy for part of a session)
N	-	No reason yet provided

Cases of truancy must be reported (in writing) as soon as possible to the Main Office so that appropriate action may be taken.

Use code B (Educated off site) for residential trips such as:

- Attending taster days at other schools
- Students attending another another school as 'guest student'
- students attending vocational courses at college

Use code V (Educational visit) for:

- School organised trips and visits including residential trips
- Foreign Exchanges

Use code C (other authorised circumstances):

- Family Bereavement
- Family Weddings

It is the duty of every Progress Tutor to monitor student attendance and punctuality, and to refer to the Progress Manager .

Progress Tutors and Progress Managers will monitor all students who:-

- Have attendance that drops below 80% in any month
- Have a regular pattern of absence
- Give cause for concern

Lateness:

Brine Leas School actively discourages late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs. The Pastoral Team will be on the main school gates every morning. The school's attendance officer will stand at the main student entrance at 8.50 am – 9.10 am issuing detentions for students who are late to school. This is supported by a member of SLT each morning. Normal register entries do not usually indicate the severity or degree of lateness and the school insists students 'sign in' at main office after 9.10am and tutors will investigate and report as necessary.

Students who are late to school will serve a 20 minute detention. Frequent lateness of students can provide grounds for prosecution of parents. This allows detection of patterns of late arrival.

Temporary school closures:

Where a school has to close due to severe weather conditions, fire or other structural damage or for in-service training, no attendance registers are needed.

Deleting students from the admissions register:

There are strict rules relating to when schools can delete students from their admissions register. Where a school has decided to remove a student from their admission roll, they should notify their LA.

If a student is to be taken off the admissions register because the child is moving to another area or school, staff should first find out the name and address of the new school and when the student will start, confirming this information with the receiving school.

School staff should be concerned:

- if the parents do not name the receiving school;
- if a student has 'disappeared' from the area without explanation;
- if a student has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term-time.

If schools are concerned they should alert the area child protection representative without delay or the LA's Designated Child Protection Officer who can decide whether to alert Social Services. Social Services may in turn involve the police. If, however, schools have good reason to believe that a crime may have been committed, they should contact the police directly.

When a family returns to their country of origin for a long period of time it should be considered as authorised absence.

Attendance Registers – Security:

Brine Leas School keeps the attendance registers secure when they are not in use and they are retained for three years from the last date of entry.

SECTION 4 - MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The School will review its policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. Effective monitoring/evaluation of the policy and its implementation is dependent upon the maintenance of accurate and up to date records. The school attendance policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school and staff, students and parents are regularly reminded of its contents, through staff meetings and briefings.

The criteria by which the monitoring and evaluation of the school attendance policy is undertaken are described below:

PARENTS:

1. any pertinent feedback from parents;
2. regular updating of the information to parents;
3. the amount of data and information given to parents regarding the attendance rates of their children.

STUDENTS:

4. the degree to which the social inclusion targets have been met – these include:
 - student achievement, e.g. increase in attendance over time;
 - the numbers of fixed-period and/or permanent exclusions;
5. any improvements in the support infrastructure for disruptive and disaffected students and those responsible for teaching them;
6. the rate of reintegration into mainstream education of students who have been out of school;
7. the incidences of bullying.
8. any pertinent feedback from students;

OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

- 9 The effectiveness of a partnership approach, making full and appropriate use of the experience and expertise of all agencies with relevant skills, e.g. voluntary organisations and the private sector wherever appropriate;

BUDGET:

- 10. any appropriate adjustments in budget allocation to reflect changing needs;

PLANNING:

- 11. time allocated to planning for students with special needs related to attendance;
- 12. the effects on school ethos/atmosphere related to attendance and related policies;

STAFF/INSET:

- 13. involvement by all staff in INSET courses relating to attendance issues when appropriate;
- 14. any improvements in the support infrastructure for disruptive and disaffected students and those responsible for teaching them;

INDEPENDENT REPORTS:

- 15. analysis and publication of OFSTED/HMI reports.

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CATEGORIES OF AUTHORISED ABSENCE:

For all absence known in advance students should be encouraged to give advance notice and to supply written evidence, such as dental appointment cards, a letter of invitation for interviews, etc. In all cases tutors should consider criteria such as the nature of the event; its frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?); whether the parent gave advance notice; the student's overall attendance pattern, etc.

Illness, medical and dental appointments:

Students should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. A student receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, BLS will consult the School Health Service, or the student's GP.

Interviews with prospective employers, or for a place at another school (including entrance examinations):

If the interview takes place during Year 11 and the school is satisfied it is linked to future education or employment prospects, absence can be recorded as 'approved educational activity'.

Dual Registration:

Where a student is dually registered at two institutions, e.g. a mainstream school and a Student Referral Unit (PRU) or special school, the student is registered as authorised absent while they are attending the other institution. A similar situation arises whilst traveller children are travelling – during this time they should enrol with another school.

Special situations and occasions:

The school responds sensitively to special situations or requests to attend events such as weddings and funerals. Situations such as family bereavement, or the child caring for a sick or disabled family member should clearly be recorded as authorised absence.

Public performances:

The Local Authority must licence a student aged 5 – 16 to take part in a public performance. Licensed participation should therefore clearly be treated as authorised absence.

Birth of a child to a student:

A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed up 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child - any other absence related to the birth should normally be treated as unauthorised.

Approved educational activities off-site:

The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used:

- field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas;
- participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities;
- interviews with prospective employers or for a place at a further or higher education establishment (Year 11 only);
- link courses, whereby students attend an FE college for part of the time;
- students receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location while remaining under overall supervision of the home school, i.e. a flexible arrangement short of formal dual registration. This can include special tuition for dyslexic children and sick children being taught at home but remaining on roll;
- approved work experience placements.

Family Holidays:

Under education law parents may request absence for students in term time only in exceptional circumstances. Brine Leas School actively discourages students taking part in family holidays during term time

If Brine Leas School does not agree absence and the student goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised. If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised. Exceptionally, if a student fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date the student may be deleted from the roll - unless of course the protracted absence is due to a good reason, e.g. illness. If a child is off school for more than ten days, the school will normally set study work for them to complete whilst away. A fine may be issued.

Study/Exam Leave:

Unsupervised study leave is not an 'approved educational activity'. It is authorised absence. Students will NOT be granted study leave prior to summer half term.

Employment:

Children of compulsory school age, are not to be employed full-time. They are, however, free to undertake a range of part-time jobs. All children of compulsory school age who choose to work part-time must be registered with the Local Authority.

Early Leaving:

A child enrolled in a school remains on the register until the due date (end of summer term Yr 11) and cannot leave at Easter or the last week of May as was previously the case. But this does not necessarily mean that the child must be on site full-time every day until the leaving date.

STUDENT EXCLUSION:

A student excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school – this includes the period whilst any review or appeal is in progress and must continue until the student is removed from the school roll.

"Exclude" means exclude on disciplinary grounds without specifying any degree of seriousness. There are two categories of exclusion: fixed period (suspension) or permanent (expulsion). Students may also be excluded from the school premises for the duration of the lunchtime break between the morning and afternoon school sessions. N.B. When an exclusion is for a fixed period (suspension) appropriate work must be set as soon as is reasonable for the excluded student.

Exclusion is a serious step which should be used only in response to serious breaches of a school's discipline policy. Exclusion should only be sanctioned after:

- i. a range of alternative strategies to resolve the student's disciplinary problems have been tried and proven to have failed and;
- ii. where allowing the student to remain in school would be seriously detrimental to the education or welfare of other students and staff, or of the student themselves.

Only the Headteacher (or acting Headteacher) can exclude a student from school and may:

- not delegate that power to someone else;
- exclude a student for one or more fixed periods not exceeding a total of 45 school days in any one school year;
- also exclude a student permanently;
- also convert a fixed period exclusion into a permanent exclusion, if they decide circumstances warrant this.

In all cases the Headteacher must promptly:

- inform the student's parent of the period of the exclusion, or that the exclusion is permanent;
- give the reasons for the exclusion;
- advise the parent that they may make representations about the exclusion to the governing body's discipline committee;
- advise the parent how their representations may be made;
- in the case of a permanent exclusion being confirmed, remove a student from the school roll on the school day either:
 - i. after the appeal committee's confirmation of permanent exclusion;
 - ii. on expiry of the time allowed for appeals to be made;
 - iii. the student takes up a place elsewhere before events i. or ii. occur.

The Headteacher must immediately notify the LA of the details of exclusion, (including the reasons for it) if:

- fixed period exclusions are converted to permanent exclusions;
- fixed period exclusions total more than five school days in any one term;
- an exclusion would result in the loss of an opportunity to take any public examination.

There are statutory procedures involving disciplinary and appeals committees for the further process of dealing with exclusions and appeals against such actions. Meanwhile absence should be recorded as authorised. Teachers are responsible for setting work for an excluded student who remains on the school roll.

Relationship to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies on admissions, and Home School Agreement

Unauthorised Absence Flowchart

