



In the knowledge that
we are loved, we are rooted
by our Christian values.

Brill Church of England School

Attendance

Policy Reviewed	Sept 2023
Policy Owner	L.White
Signed Headteacher	L.White
Review date	Sept 2024

Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Brill C of E school believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Brill C of E school values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Brill C of E school recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents / legal guardians must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents / legal guardians secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Present at approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents / legal guardians. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received with sufficient notice.

Parents / legal guardians should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent / legal guardian, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents / legal guardians.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness:

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent / legal guardian informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents / legal guardians may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment confirmation, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments:

Parents / legal guardians are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents / legal guardians should show the appointment confirmation to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances:

Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.

Leave of absence in exceptional circumstance:

The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances and evidence may be required in each case.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent / legal guardian is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent / legal guardian or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.

- Religious observance - The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent / legal guardian belongs”.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents / legal guardians to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent / legal guardian.

Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- 2) Year 6 transition day (for pupils in Year 6).
- 3) Year 6 SATs week (for pupils in Year 6).

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help the Headteacher to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested.
- Duration of the absence - number of school days being missed.
- The child’s current attendance and punctuality rate.
- Exceptional term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose.
- Whether parent / legal guardians have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday.
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent / legal guardians to limit the time away from school.
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN.
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost /parental / legal guardians work commitments.

Suspension (no alternative provision made):

Suspension from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Late Arrival:

Registration begins at **8:30am**. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but having arrived late. **The register will close at 8:50am. Pupils arriving after the close of the register will be recorded as absent. This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.**

On arrival after the close of the register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. (Code M)

The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late after the registers close without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry. (Code U)

Unauthorised absence:

Absence will not be authorised unless parents / legal guardians have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniforms.
- Having their hair cut.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes.
- "Couldn't get up".
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school.
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school.

Term Time Holiday

Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Visiting family during term time will not be authorised unless there are additional exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher in liaison with the Governors to decide what might constitute exceptional circumstances and the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The revised statutory instrument can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2006/1751/contents/made> Brill C of E School adheres to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged. Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

- Illness.
- Religious observance.
- Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours.
- External exams.
- Visit to another school.

Leave of Absence and Extended Leave

Parents / legal guardians do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and are strongly advised not to do so.

Parents / legal guardians should be aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

Parents / legal guardians wishing to take their child out of school during term time must send a written request to the Headteacher in sufficient time before arrangements are made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave.
- Age of the pupil.
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record.
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations.
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work missed.
- Pupil's educational needs.
- General welfare of the pupil.
- Circumstances of the request.
- Purpose of the leave.
- Previous term time absence taken.
- When the request was made.

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response. Where a request has been granted, the letter should state:

- The expected date of return.
- That parents / legal guardians must contact school should any delays occur.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school will refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Religious Observance

Brill C of E School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and that this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. (Code R)

It is reasonable for a parent / legal guardian to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent / legal guardian's religious body.

Parents / legal guardians are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Absence in excess of this will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents / legal guardians from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent / legal guardian is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. Traveller absence (Code T) is acceptable only when the family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents / legal guardians of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Buckinghamshire, if a Traveller family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Brill C of E School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily whilst away from their base school. In such cases, the pupil's school place at Brill C of E School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

Brill C of E School can operate effectively as the child's base school only if we are engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families.

This means that parents / legal guardians must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen.
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

Brill C of E School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school.
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service.
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced.

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as for any other pupil.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will be deleted from the register only when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority.
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed.
- Death of a pupil.
- Transfer between schools.
- When a parent / legal guardian informs the school in writing that the pupil is to be withdrawn to be educated outside the school system and Local Authority advised.
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age.
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team).
- 20 days' continuous unauthorised absence have elapsed and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.
- A pupil has left the school but it is not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil.

Brill C of E School will follow Buckinghamshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Roles and Responsibilities

Brill C of E School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents / legal guardians, pupils and the wider school community.

The school will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents / legal guardians.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents / legal guardians.

- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the Local Authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

Expectation that Parents / legal guardians will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child away from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time. Where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Headteacher in advance of booking the holiday (see exceptional circumstances definition and details on Page 3&4).

Using Attendance Data

All pupils' attendance will be monitored and will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every term the office will provide the SLT staff with attendance data for the previous term.

The office will send an email to all parents/legal guardians each term highlighting their child's attendance figures. If school are concerned about a child's attendance, a meeting will be called with parents / legal gattuardians to discuss any concerns surrounding attendance.

This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1). Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Brill C of E School will share attendance data with the Local Authority as required. All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Support Systems

Brill C of E School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents / legal guardians should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Brill C of E School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance.

Strategies used will include (where appropriate):

- Discussion with parents / legal guardians and pupils.
- Attendance report cards.
- Referrals to support agencies.
- Learning mentors.
- Friendship groups.
- Reward systems.
- Reduced timetable for a set short term period.
- Additional learning support.
- Behaviour support.
- Inclusion units.
- Reintegration support packages.

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents / legal guardians and pupils.

Legal Sanctions

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, Brill C of E School will notify the Buckinghamshire Education Welfare Service of the irregular attendance. The Education Welfare Service or school, may invite parents / legal guardians to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority, school and the parent / legal guardian, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly. The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- Intervention has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.
- A pupil has taken leave of absence i.e. for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent / legal guardian the opportunity to avoid a prosecution. A £60 fine, per parent / legal guardian, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent / legal guardian, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution

The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents / legal guardians realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Appendix 1
Intervention Flow Chart

School will notify parent / legal guardian of the child's irregular school attendance and offer them the opportunity and support to improve.



If you receive a letter informing you of concerns regarding your child's attendance you should

- Speak with your child to see if there are any reasons why they are reluctant to attend.
- Contact the school to discuss any difficulties you or your child may be experiencing.
- Ensure your child attends school regularly.



If there is no improvement and the parent / legal guardian has not provided a good reason for the absence, the school may refer to the Education Welfare Service



The Education Welfare Service will invite you to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and may issue a Warning of a Penalty Notice.



A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between you and the Local Authority aimed at supporting you in improving your child's school attendance.



Whilst your involvement in a Parenting Contract is voluntary, if you fail to engage with the support offered and your child's attendance remains irregular, the Education Welfare Service may issue a Penalty Notice or begin legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court. If you are issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 per parent / legal guardian, per child this must be paid in full within 21 days otherwise the Penalty will increase to £120 per parent / legal guardian, per child. If you fail to pay the Penalty by the 28th day, the Education Welfare Service may instigate legal proceedings against you. If you are found guilty of this offence you can be fined up to £2500 and/or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

