

BRANNEL SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Written by: Mrs C Hunt

Approved by Governors: 28 June 2018

Rationale

Brannel School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all children and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We want to do our best for all our children and believe that regular attendance at school is vital for children as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and in their friendships. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason is unavoidable. The 1996 Education Act makes it clear that parents/carers must ensure that compulsory school-age children receive a regular full-time education and that if any child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly then the parent of the child is guilty of an offence.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all children feel valued and welcome. For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to children and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills. Each year we will examine our attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Cornwall attendance targets. The schools will discuss the attendance figures and the success of this policy on an annual basis and will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. Attendance figures will be monitored on a monthly basis.

Brannel School define 'regular' attendance as 95% and above.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that each school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. In law only, the Governors can grant leave of absences for a child, but Governors will delegate this responsibility to the Headteacher or designated Deputy in their absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded, in the first instance, as unauthorised.

Lateness and Punctuality

Morning registration will take place at the start of school. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any child arriving after 30 minutes will be marked as having an unauthorised absence, unless there is an acceptable explanation such as delayed school transport. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Medical evidence may be requested to support the absence e.g. appointment cards; prescriptions, Doctors notes; hospital appointment discharge letters.

Children arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated, for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close. Where a child misses part of a school day for an unavoidable medical or other appointment, we expect parents and carers to take reasonable steps to ensure the child is able to be at school for the remainder of the day. Children who are not at school when they could have been will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

At Brannel School, children are expected to arrive to each of their lessons on time. Children who are late without a good reason will be recorded late (L) in Lesson Monitor and their minutes late recorded. Persistent lateness will be treated as a breach of the behaviour code.

First Day of Absence

On the first day of an absence, parents or carers should contact their child's school before the registration period closes. If no contact has been made, the Attendance Lead will endeavour to contact parents or carers as quickly as possible during the school day and will transfer information to the registers, alerting the Headteacher or other key staff to any wellbeing issues.

If no contact is received from parents or carers by the end of the morning of absence, we will make daily contact until a response is received. We will also make general enquires during this time and try other contact numbers.

If we have had no contact from a parent/carer after two days, a truancy visit may be made by the Student Welfare Office, or reported to the police as a safeguarding concern.

It should be noted that if all attempts to contact parents/carers fail, and we are not aware of the reason for your child's absence, then their absence could be coded as unauthorised.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

We monitor attendance periodically. When a child's attendance falls lower than 90% or causes concern, their parents or carers will be contacted by the school. We will look for patterns and reasons for absence, making parents or carers aware of the number of absences and the importance of attendance. Additional support may be available from outside agencies such as the school nurse or family support workers. In other cases, the school will seek advice from the Student Welfare Officer (SWO). Action may include the use of the Fast Track system and/or Fixed Penalty Notices. Monitoring will continue, and a Common Assessment Framework meeting could be considered. Any child who is absent, without an explanation, for 20 unauthorised sessions out of 100 will be notified to the Local Authority by submitting a referral to Education Welfare Services. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence, all children are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the child receives help to catch up on missed work and updated on any information which has been passed to other children.

Absence notes

Notes of telephone calls received and written notes from parents or carers explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the time which the child attends a particular school.

If there are attendance concerns about the child, then further medical evidence may be required (e.g. doctor's note, prescription, medicine label). The Headteacher retains the right to not authorise absence without medical evidence.

Promoting attendance

We will work actively to improve attendance in our area and give consistent messages about the importance of good attendance. The schools will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents or carers of their responsibility to ensure that their children receive education and will make clear the links between attendance and attainment.

Attendance Awards

The school will reward children who have good or improving attendance, in particular through praising the individual child and, for example, by awarding certificates and prizes for 100% attendance regularly.

Holidays in Term Time

Recent changes to guidance issued to accompany the Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that parents/carers **do not have a legal right to take their child out of school for holidays in term time.**

Applications for leave must be in exceptional circumstances. Parents or carers will be reminded of the effect absence can have on a child's potential achievement. Requests for holidays will not be authorised except for in exceptional circumstances. These requests should be made at least two weeks in advance, using the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form.

If the school refuses a request for term-time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as **unauthorised absence.**

The school will not consider more than one leave of absence request per academic year.

Warning

Brannel School's Attendance Policy defines regular attendance as 95% and above. If your child's attendance falls below this because of a holiday, the Student Welfare Officer may be notified, and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

If parents or carers take their child(ren) out of school without permission, they will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may decide to prosecute. A conviction may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a prison sentence of up to three months or both. Alternatively, a penalty notice may be issued under Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996. This carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in court action.

Flexi Schooling

It is our belief at Brannel School that flexi-schooling is not of benefit to our students, and we will not support an application for flexi-schooling unless there are exceptional circumstances. All applications will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.