

Attendance Matters!

In school, on time,
all day, every day!

Attendance Focus

Caroline Hunt
Student Welfare Officer

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PARENT NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2022

Firstly, can I thank you for your support in continuing to send your children to school during these unsettled times, which has certainly been challenging. It is good to see that students have adapted well to changes that have had to be made and are keen to be back in the classrooms and wanting to engage in their learning again. As things seem to change from day to day, I feel it is important to update you on current legislation around school attendance, and also inform you of key aspects of Brannel School's Attendance Policy

Brannel School Expectations

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Brannel School recognises its responsibilities to ensure children are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum of days and hours. Our School Attendance Policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education, in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. At Brannel School we deem good attendance as 96% and above. Any attendance that falls below this threshold will be deemed as 'not regular'.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at school, miss just over 4 half terms of learning, or 19 full schools in each year.

Table of impact

Attendance %	Impact on Learning	Impact on Learner
96% – 100%	Best chance of success	Your child is taking full advantage of every learning opportunity
90% - 96%	At least 2 weeks of learning missed	Your child will have to spend time at home catching up on missed learning.
85% - 90%	At least 4 weeks of learning missed	Your child is at risk of under achieving and will need extra support from you to catch up on missed learning.
80% - 85%	At least 5 ½ weeks of learning missed.	Your child's poor attendance is having a significant impact on learning.
Below 80%	At least 7 ½ weeks of learning missed.	Your child is missing out on a broad and balanced education. You are at risk of prosecution.

First Day Contact

If your child is absent from school you must contact the school with a reason for the absence. If we do not receive any verbal or written communication from you then the Attendance Officer will telephone home, daily if necessary. If no response is received, other contacts held for your child will also be contacted. If we have not heard from any contacts, then a home visit may be conducted. If no response is received to this home visit your child may be referred to the Local Authority as a possible Child Missing Education. Contact may also be made with Children's Services and/or the police in line with safeguarding procedures. **The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

COVID Absence coding

There have been concerns raised by parents around being absent from school due to testing positive for COVID, and the impact this has on attendance. Unfortunately, we have no option but to follow the guidance given by the Department of Education, which is to code any pupil positive for COVID as 'I' (illness). This will have an impact on a pupil's attendance and their attendance will drop. However, no further action will be taken by the school, and we are mindful of this when looking at overall attendance.

Lateness

Any pupil who comes into school after 9am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15am (15 minutes after start time) will be marked as **unauthorised** absence for the morning. Pupils who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence. **However, routine dentist or doctor's appointments should be made outside of the school day.**

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, and all attempts to improve punctuality have failed, the Local Authority may be approached to give consideration for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Holidays in Term Time

Whilst we appreciate that many of you have had to postpone holidays due to COVID, and that you are now re-booking these holidays, our stance on holidays in term time still remains the same, that an absence from school will only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances'. This will be at the Head teacher's discretion and if he is satisfied that **exceptional circumstances** exist.

The law states:

If your child is absent from school without authorization, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a penalty notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A of the said Act. Penalty notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry 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 legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 (1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to court.

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and; any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Have care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

All requests for absence should be made formally to the Headteacher at least two weeks in advance using the [Request for Absence Form](#). It is important that you provide the school with full details of the reason for requesting the absence (holiday) within term time, and how the request has been affected by COVID-19. We may request evidence if you advise that leave has been cancelled or blocked within school holidays due to being employed as a front-line worker, which has resulted in the request for absence in term time when you would ordinarily have booked a holiday outside of term time. If you are unable to provide this evidence, the request may be refused. Holidays that are rebooked within term time that was the subject of an original termtime booking will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance

Book routine visits to the doctors or dentists outside of school time

Please make every effort to book routine appointments outside of school hours. Where appointments have to be made during school hours please ensure children miss as little time as possible and collect and return your child as close to the start of the appointment and as soon after as possible. If your child has an appointment before (and will therefore be later coming into school) or during school time we request parents if possible, to provide an appointment card/letter so that the school can verify the appointment.

Support with School Attendance

Your child has a right to an education and to be safe and happy at school. But sometimes children and young people can be anxious about going to school. This can happen for lots of reasons but can happen when they have a worry about something like homework or a class test, or if they are being bullied or had a fall out with other children or teacher.

Sometimes parents let their child stay off school because they think the school isn't handling these kinds of things well enough. Unfortunately, this will not help find a solution. It is important to talk to the school if this kind of problem happens.

If you would like to discuss any issues your child may be having which is preventing them from attending school, please contact the school as soon as possible and speak to someone in the Pastoral Team. The key members of this Team are: Caroline Hunt, Student Welfare and Attendance Officer, Caroline Hill, Pastoral Support Officer and Jordan Nash, Pastoral Support Officer.