

<u>Reviewer</u> Governing Body	BROOKFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL <u>Attendance Policy</u>	<u>Review date</u> Spring 2019
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Statement of Intent

- Brookfield Junior School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.
- One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality. A record of their attendance forms part of the end of year reports which are sent home to parents and are also passed on to Secondary Schools.
- We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role, and a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance and we promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and other agencies to resolve attendance problems.

Parental responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent.

This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.30 and 8.45am. All pupils arriving after 8.45am must report to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The role of the teacher

Head Teacher, Mrs Melanie Blewer, has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the Attendance Registers twice daily is a legal requirement.

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The class teacher marks a pupil present or leaves a blank space if the pupil is absent. The office marks the registers when a pupil is late.

It is the responsibility of School Receptionist and Pupil Administration Manager, to ensure:-

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- The appropriate attendance codes are entered onto the registers
- Parents are contacted if no reason for absence is provided
- Letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence, in cases where there has been no communication

Frequent absence is also a cause for concern. Our Pupil Administration Manager, Family Liaison Officer and SENCo are very helpful and can normally clarify whether ongoing absence is justified.

School Action for Attendance

- 95%-100% ~ child wears attendance medal for 1 week in the following term to celebrate good attendance.
- 90%-95% ~ parents informed by letter; attendance monitored through monthly meetings between school and SLO
- Below 90% ~ parents informed by letter; medical evidence required to authorise absence. A Home:School meeting to be held if attendance percentage does not improve; referral to PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service; which may lead to a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.
- Whatever the percentage of attendance, if there has been an improvement from one term to the next then the child wears an attendance medal for 1 week in the following term to celebrate good attendance.

Project 95

At Brookfield Junior School we work closely with the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service to ensure every child achieves a minimum of 95% attendance.

Project 95 is a prescriptive 'whole school' attendance programme that creates a partnership between the school, families and the School Liaison Officer (SLO).

Project 95 stages

1. Whole School 'Project 95' Letter ~ every parent/carer (regardless of their child's attendance %) receives an awareness letter.
2. Children below 95% ~ their parent/carer receives a letter informing them of their child's current attendance % and that we will now be entering a monitoring period. Support is offered to the family.

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3. At the end of first monitoring period ~ all children who were below 95% but have now reached 95% receive a letter of celebration. Parents/carers of children whose attendance has not improved will be invited in to school for a meeting (which the SLO may attend) to explore the reasons for the child's absence. Support is offered to the family and actions agreed to help improve the child's attendance. The second monitoring date is decided.
4. End of second monitoring period ~ all children who were below 95% but have now reached 95% receive a letter of celebration. Parents/carers of children whose attendance has not improved will be invited in to school for a meeting (which the SLO may attend) to explore the reasons for the child's absence. For some parent/carers this may be their second meeting. Support is offered to the family and actions agreed to help improve the child's attendance. A referral to the Local Authority could be made resulting in possible Penalty Notice, prosecution or court date being issued. Penalty Notices are issued to **each parent of each child** and the amount of the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service.

At any stage during our monitoring a child may be added in to Project 95, if their attendance has dropped below 95%.

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and there are at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 100 consecutive school sessions the matter will be referred to the Local Authority. School Liaison Officer (SLO) action may include home visits, multi-agency meetings, sign-posting to supportive agencies or issuing a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Referral

Firstly, the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service issues a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded. If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period then a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:-

- Truancy
- Parentally condoned absence
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed

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- Excessive holidays during term time
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where penalty notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Children Missing Education

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between school and the Local Authority.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Lateness

At Brookfield Junior School the register is taken at 8.45am and 1.25pm.

Pupils arriving after these times must enter by the main entrance and report to Reception where their name and class will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code L).

The register will close at 8.55am and 1.30pm to coincide with the start of lessons.

Pupils arriving after register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code U) and this will count as unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents through letter.

Frequent lateness can provide grounds for Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Penalty Notice procedures for Lateness

- **10 incidents of lateness after the registers have closed in 100 consecutive sessions may lead to a referral to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service for a Penalty Notice Warning letter**
- The Penalty Notice Warning letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised lateness is to be recorded
- If unauthorised lateness is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued ~ one per parent per child.
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, **LA** may instigate court proceedings.

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Authorised/Unauthorised absence

It is only the Head Teacher who can authorise absence for approved reasons. Absence is either authorised, such as in the case of illness or of religious observance, or unauthorised, when there is no reason given for such absence or when it is considered that the explanation is unjustified or unreasonable.

In cases of excessive absence due to illness, medical evidence will be required.

The following are examples of the kind of absence that will not be authorised:-

- Persistent non-specific illness
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Parental illness
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half-a-day without very good reason
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip

Leave of absence/holiday

Time off school for family holidays is not a right.

Schools have discretion to allow up to 10 days absence in a school year, with a maximum of 5 days in any one term, for leave in special circumstances such as:-

- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.
- For employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time, and if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the child's education.

Parents must fill in an **Absence Request** Form', available from the school office.

At Brookfield Junior School we consider each request for holiday absence individually but will only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances. A child's existing attendance record will be considered in making the decision whether to grant holiday leave and absence will not be authorised if it takes a pupil's absence record below 90%. Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body.

We never normally authorise holidays in term time under the following circumstances:

- At the beginning of school terms
- During assessment/testing weeks

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- Where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health (25 days absence in the previous year or where there have already been 10 or more days absence in the current year)

We will always invite parents/carers into school to discuss any proposed holiday in term time with the Head Teacher. A proposed holiday will never be authorised if parents/carers do not attend such a meeting. Leave of absence during term time is authorised, or not, by the school. The school cannot authorise more than ten days unless there are exceptional circumstances. A child authorised to take 10 days holiday can only attain 94.7% attendance, if they are not absent for any other reason throughout the year.

If the family have children attending Brookfield Infant School then meetings will be held jointly. If the family have children attending other local schools, then every effort will be made to liaise and agree a decision.

A letter is sent home to confirm the school's decision regarding the holiday request.

Holidays taken without the school's permission, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence is unauthorised (truancy). The deliberate taking of a holiday in term time without or against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not or would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions (5 days), may result in parents being liable to a penalty notice.

If we believe a child has been taken on holiday during term time, including if they have been reported as unwell, we will ask parents/carers to provide evidence within 10 school days. If no evidence is received a referral to PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service will be made which may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued.

If a pupil fails to return within ten school days of the agreed return date, and if there is not a good reason for this absence, the school, in discussion with the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service, may remove the pupil's name from the school roll.

Attendance Process

1. Parents telephone the school with reasons for pupil absence
2. The designated person enters details and an absence mark in the register for the duration of the absence
3. On receipt of a note from the parent, the designated person enters the appropriate code in the register
4. When appropriate, school staff raise concerns with the designated person
5. The designated person takes appropriate action where absence is a concern and contacts the parents to discuss attendance issues

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6. Referral is made to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service if issues cannot be resolved.

This policy and the procedures contained therein will be reviewed every two years, unless there is a change in legislation or new directives from the Local Authority.

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