



BALFOUR JUNIOR ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

This Policy operates in accordance with the framework and advice contained within the Medway guidance on achieving and maintaining high attendance, which the academy and its Governing Body intend to follow.

AASSA	Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies
AAP	Attendance Advisory Practitioners.
SIMS	School Information Management System
DfE	Department for Education.

N.B The term 'parent' should also be taken to mean the person with care responsibilities.

Principles

- Regular and full time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life
- It is the parents responsibility to contact the school on the first day of an absence
- The school and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to

- Set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school
- Clarify the role of the parents/carer

The School will:

- give attendance and punctuality a high priority
- provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe, and know that their presence is valued
- raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents
- encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education
- encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life
- ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using a computer based registration system, and absences are followed up promptly
- communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc)
- meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence
- ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality

- 🏰 ensure information is available for Governors and parents
- 🏰 ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs
- 🏰 develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality
- 🏰 share good practice with other schools
- 🏰 have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence.

Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

- 🏰 All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.
- 🏰 New parents are given a booklet highlighting the importance of good school attendance. Copies are available from reception.
- 🏰 A representative from AASSA attends our 'new parent meeting' before the pupils join year 3.
- 🏰 The newsletter is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder.
- 🏰 Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- 🏰 Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for work.
- 🏰 Maintain up to date records within the *SIMS* system.
- 🏰 Liaise with the AAP during regular monitoring visits to identify attendance concerns.

We expect the parent to:

- 🏰 provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.
- 🏰 notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence.
- 🏰 telephone the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing.
- 🏰 in cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return.
- 🏰 make medical/dental appointments outside of school hours, where possible.
- 🏰 provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- 🏰 ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- 🏰 let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.
- 🏰 understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.

Registers

The method of maintaining the class registers is through the SIMS Attendance Module. Class teachers complete an electronic registration sheet twice daily, this is checked by the office.

The following codes are used on SIMS

M	medical or dental appointments authorised
I	illness authorised
L	late before registers closed authorised
U	late after registers closed unauthorised
C	other authorised circumstances (exceptional)
H	annual family holiday authorised
G	family holiday not agreed unauthorised

N	no reason yet provided for absence unauthorised
V	educational visit or trip authorised
P	approved sporting activity
R	religious activities authorised
B	educated off-site
E	exclusion authorised
O	unauthorised absence not covered by above unauthorised

Registers close at 9:05 a.m. Lateness after this time is classed an unauthorised absence unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absences can be authorised if they are for certain reasons e.g. sickness, absence following the death of a close member of the family or attendance at an interview or examination.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

An absence will be classified as unauthorised when:

-  a child is kept off school because a parent is ill
-  a child is absent because a sibling is ill
-  the parent cannot get the child to school
-  the child is taken on a shopping trip
-  the child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat
-  a child is absent due to family work patterns
-  the family have overslept or had a late night
-  the child needs to be treated for head lice and treatment takes longer than half a day
-  the child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
-  a child is late after registers close and without a satisfactory explanation
-  there is a problem with the child's school uniform
-  the family are on holiday
-  the weather is bad
-  your child's attendance is below 93% and you cannot provide medical evidence

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the DfE.

Parents have a responsibility to **telephone** the school if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment a note must be received by the class teacher before the appointment. When a child returns from a period of absence due to a sickness, a note must be provided. The class teacher dates and signs all notes so that the school office may complete the weekly absence report.

The school will telephone the child's home to enquire about an absence if the parent has not contacted the school on the first day of absence.

If your child suffers a broken bone and is wearing a cast we are happy for them to attend school, if medical professionals agree. However, for their own safety we will not allow them to participate in P.E. or go out on the large playground at break/lunch times.

If a child has been absent without an explanation, parents will be sent a letter. If no satisfactory response is received, a follow up reminder will be sent. Should this still result in a nil response, the absence will be marked unauthorised and the school will inform the AAP about the child's lack of attendance.

Where there is cause for concern, i.e. when attendance is below 93% in any term, the reasons for this will be investigated and where appropriate, discussed with the AAP during one of their regular visits.

Requests for Leave of absence

It should be noted that leave during term time is granted in extenuating circumstances and cannot be for longer than 5 days in any one year. There is no parental right to a ten day period. The Governors of Balfour Juniors will only consider requests for absence if the child / children concerned have 95% attendance in the last academic year, and current academic year. Requests for children who have less than 95% attendance will not be considered and therefore any subsequent absence will be unauthorised.

Parents are asked to support the school with its aims and not to take their children away from school during term time. Requests for leave must be in writing and an appointment is then arranged with the Headteacher.

Upon receipt of this letter, the Headteacher will make a decision. The reasons must be made clear to the Headteacher. Parents are asked to reflect on the possible impact that this time out of school will have on their child's learning when requesting such authorisation. *Please also bear in mind that significant periods of absence can impact on a child's social relationships and affect friendship patterns.

Parents have no right to demand that absences are authorised. (Regulation 8 of the Education Regulations 1995 applies).

Parents of children in Years 2 and 6 are particularly requested to avoid taking leave in the first half of the Summer Term when the end of KS1 and 2 statutory tests take place. **Absences will not be authorised during preparation for and administration of SATs.**

If a pupil goes on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the AAP will be informed.

Sanctions

Where absences are unauthorised....

- 🏆 Referral can be made to the AAP, where legal sanctions maybe applied, in the usual manner.
- 🏆 Where 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) occur, the school can apply to the LEA for the issuing of a **Penalty Notice**. * This application would be made after consultation with the AAP.

The offence of non – school attendance is absolute, and the legal requirement regarding evidence is simply that the child did not attend.

From September 2013, the DfE has amended the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, so that any parent/carer who receives a penalty notice for taking their child out of school during term time will have to pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

Failure to pay will result in a summons to the magistrate court.

Punctuality

Gates open	8.20am
Staff supervise the playground from	8.30am (children should not be unattended until staff are out)
Doors open	8.40am
Doors close	8.50am
Registration opens	8.50am
Registration closes	9.05am

The school day begins at 8.50a.m. Children arriving after 8.50 a.m. should report to the school office. The registers close at 9.05a.m. Any children arriving after this time without a reason for doing so will be regarded as being absent without authorisation.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply with them. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education, but also that of others in the class.

Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the APP and/or Social Services where relevant.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances where the school is made aware of a situation, an arrangement allowing a degree of flexibility can be agreed with the Headteacher.

Medical Appointments

Parents must sign their child(ren) out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day. A log is kept for the purpose. Parents should come to the office, where the office staff will contact the classroom and ask that the child comes down to reception to meet their parent/carer.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

Monitoring

The Headteacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.

All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

The School has regular meetings with the APP to discuss concerns and review absence data.

This policy was formally adopted in September 2018.

Next Review Date: September 2020.