

Belleville Primary School

Attendance Policy

Effective from	Autumn term 2024
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Introduction

At Belleville Primary School we expect the highest attendance and punctuality from all children, at all times. We will support and work together with children and their families to ensure excellent attendance is achieved. Regular attendance is crucial to having a positive impact on children achieving their full potential in learning. At Belleville we believe that children learn most effectively if they attend school regularly and arrive at school on time.

Good attendance at school is essential for children to make the most of the educational opportunities that are on offer. It will also improve academic performance, social skills and emotional well-being. It has shown to help children develop life skills and prepare them for the transition into adulthood. Punctuality also influences the progress of children within school. The school will strive to make children's learning time at school engaging and worthwhile. Parents/guardians have a duty to make sure their children attend school and on time.

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

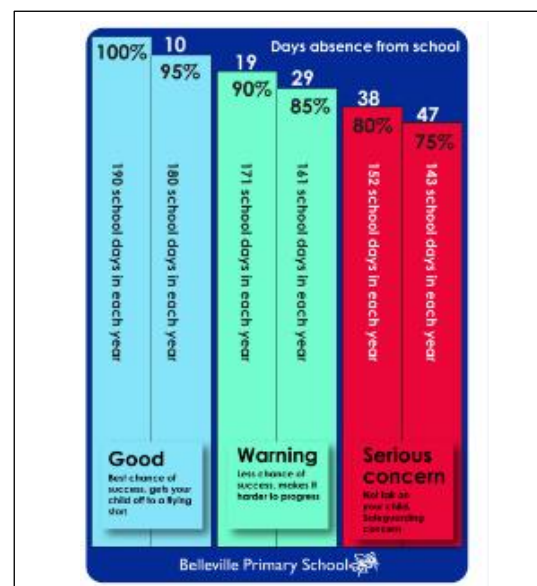
The school will show consideration:

- To children with serious medical needs or complex health conditions that are supported by health professionals and require regular appointments.
- To children who have extended absence due to operations, measles, chicken pox, bone fractures etc. This will be taken into consideration if they fall below the expected 90% threshold.

2. What is Good attendance

Nationally:

- 95% and above is considered as Good attendance.
- 90% or lower is classified as Persistent absence (PA).
- 50% or lower is classified as Severely absence (SA)



3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governing Body

The LGB is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or groups who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all relevant staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

We have a Link Governor for attendance.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Local Governing Body
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHCP) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channel

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed or delegating this to a member of SLT
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mary-Lyne Latour.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent and severe absences.

The attendance officer is Joanne Sultan.

3.5 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School Admin Staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system, using the correct codes.
- Report the absence of pupils who are vulnerable to the SLT or Attendance Officer.

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and is on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the first day of the absence, and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support where necessary, for maintaining good attendance by contacting their child's class teacher, School Attendance Officer, SENCO, a Deputy Headteacher, or the Headteacher.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the second session. We will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix I for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- The school day timings are sent to all families and available on the school website.
- The register for the first session will be taken at the start of the first lesson. The register for the second session will be taken when pupils are back in the classroom following lunch.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence, by 9:00am, or as soon as practically possible, by contacting the school.

Where the absence is longer than 2 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment may be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers must submit the Absence Request Form, from the office. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time

necessary. The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. **(L)**
- After the register has closed, but before the end of the session, will be marked using the appropriate code. **(U)**

Pupils must arrive at school during their allotted start time, on each school day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Pupils who arrive after their allotted time are late. They must come into the building via the main office, who should share the reason for the late arrival. The pupil will be recorded as being late. Punctuality is monitored.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, we will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the EWO service.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider contacting the Education Welfare officer.
- Report the unexplained absence to the school's Attendance Officer.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with we may contact external agencies.

4.6 Reporting to parents

We will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels in termly Parent Teacher meetings and written reports.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated activity
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office.

The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made).

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school.
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration).
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority.
- Attending work experience.
- If there is any other avoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

*An **authorised absence** is classified as when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from the parent or carer, in advance, in writing or through a telephone call.

*An **unauthorised absence** is classified as when a child is away from school without permission.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is a statutory obligation. We expect all children to attend school every day and on time. We also offer support and various strategies for children who find attending school a challenge.

In order to do this we might take the following actions:

- Remind parents through newsletters of their duty to send their children to school each day.
- Celebrate 100% attendance for each half term by awarding certificates.
- Award children with 100% attendance for the year with an attendance badge.
- Offer parents support where their child's attendance is an issue.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

We will work with every family, and agencies that are involved with the family, to remove barriers to attendance.

7.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil has an education health and care plan (EHC) and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

We will work with every family and agencies that are involved with the family, to ensure there is a smooth transition back to school.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

We will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

We have granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.

We will benchmark our attendance data against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the LGB.

8.2 Analysing attendance

We will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance.
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

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- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

We will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the LGB and SLT.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with the local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

We will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Consider the best action to take when attendance falls below 95%. We might send a letter home, or make a phone call to parents informing them that their child's attendance has fallen below what is expected. The aim of this contact is to support the family ensure their child is at school when expected. If there are trends identified this will be also shared and discussed.
- The Attendance Officer will write to, or speak with, families if punctuality is a concern, to offer support.
- Attendance Panels are set up by the school. Parents are invited to attend the panel to discuss their child's attendance and ways in which it could be improved. At the meeting we will cover the following:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school.
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance.
 - Explain the help that is available.
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence.
 - Review any existing actions or interventions.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority.
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy