

## **Banwell Primary School**

### **Attendance Policy**

If your child has a 90% attendance record this means that they are absent from lessons for the equivalent of one  $\frac{1}{2}$  **day every week. This means that over the course of a year they have missed the equivalent of almost 4 weeks of lessons in the school year. Over 5 years, if they continue at a rate of 90% attendance they will miss the equivalent of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a school year.**

**If your child has an attendance rate of 80%, this is equal to almost 8 weeks of school in one year and 1 year over a 5 year period.**

#### **Why we need the policy**

Banwell School is committed to providing a full education to all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a successful school life. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links.

If there are *ongoing* issues which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly as possible. This may involve referrals to appropriate outside agencies such as Education Welfare Service.

#### **Principles**

Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive relevant training on Registration Regulations and Education Law.

Expect parents/carers to contact the school on the first day of absence.

Communicate attendance rates around the school and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.

Regularly consult with members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

Send newsletters to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues.

Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent she/he will be missed and he/she is missing out on vital learning.

## **Procedures**

Every term attendance analysis is completed and 100% attendance certificates are provided. To further celebrate good attendance the class with the highest attendance each week will receive a class certificate.

Attendance is recorded twice daily in the class registers, as soon as possible after the whistle is blown at 8:50am and again after lunch at 1:10pm. If a child arrives at school after this time, upon reporting to the school office they will be marked in the late book for fire safety reasons and our records. A log will be kept and monitored for those children arriving late. Providing they arrive before registration fully closes the lateness will be authorised. Registration fully closes at 9:30am. Children arriving after this time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This won't be the case for appointments or other exceptional circumstances which the school has been made aware of via letter, telephone or email.

The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness may include:

- Informing parents verbally when lateness is becoming too frequent.
- Letters to parents from the school if lateness continues.
- Involvement of Education Welfare Officers eg letters to or visits and meetings with identified families and occasional punctuality sweeps outside the school gate.

Children's Annual Reports to Parents will clearly identify the number of times late. If a child is late 5 or more times in a single term, a letter will be sent home with the aim of highlighting the issue and improving the outcome in the future. (See attached).

As it is a legal requirement for school to know the whereabouts of all children under their care during each school day: if no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of an absence school staff will:

- Attempt to contact the parent/carer by telephone, or if the parent/carer is unobtainable;
- Write a letter requesting information, or
- If deemed appropriate, a member of the school staff may visit the pupil's home.

If the above actions do not elicit an explanation for the absence a second phone call, home visit or letter may be actioned and the school's Education Welfare Officer will be consulted.

As part of our ongoing monitoring, any parents / carers with a child whose attendance falls below a specific percentage which falls below the school average over one term will receive notification via a letter. (See attached) The school's Learning Mentor will hold meetings or 'attendance clinics' with parents of children with attendance that is well below average in an attempt to support improvement.

In order for this policy to be successful every member of the school staff, by their behaviour, must make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education. This means ensuring that all teaching staff attend regularly, arrive on time to lessons and are well prepared.

## **Performance**

We aim to have overall school attendance percentages **at least** in line with national averages for other primary schools. Each year the governors will check whether this has been met and if not, try and establish why not.

Part of the evaluation process will be to look at what interventions have been successful. This will include considering:-

- Has the attendance of individual pupils and/or attendance as a whole improved?
- Is the attendance of any particular pupil cohorts causing concern eg boys, girls, FSM, SEN, EAL etc
- Has the behaviour of pupils improved?
- How successful have pupil reintegration plans been?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the community?
- How well informed are new pupils about the importance of attendance and the policy and procedures operating within the school?
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) lessons or as a theme for any other curricular lessons?

## **First day contact**

First day contact is an integral part of the Attendance Policy. Parents and pupils must realise that a pupil's absence will be noted and acted upon swiftly. This will make pupils more reluctant to be absent themselves. First day contact sends a clear message to pupils and parents that attendance is very important and as mentioned previously is a legal requirement.

For the schools policy of the first day contact to work efficiently:

- Parents should inform the school of the reason for an absence the first morning a pupil is away. Parents will need to be aware of what is expected of them and challenged if they fail to inform the school of the reasons for absence, or if the reasons given for the absence are unacceptable.
- The telephone is the preferred method of contact as letters can arrive too late and can get lost or emails on occasions may not be able to be accessed.
- If the parent has not contacted school by 9.10am then the parents should expect to be contacted by a member of school staff.

This procedure will be most effective if it is applied to every unexplained absence and gives a clear message that absences are not allowed for reasons other than those determined by the law.

## **Holiday and Extended Leave During Term Time / Fixed Penalty Notices**

Following amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 it is expected that all schools to take a much firmer stance on requests for any pupil leave during term time from September 2013. In line with this change, the school will be working alongside the Local Authority Education Welfare Service to consider issuing penalty notices.

It is only in exceptional circumstances that holiday during term time will be authorised. Exceptional circumstances are defined as:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- **Exceptional significant** family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you.

The Headteacher will consider every above request individually but the **following will not meet the criteria:**

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend family weddings and visits to see family abroad.

Any pupil absence requests must be recorded on the appropriate form (attached) and be submitted well in advance. Parents and Carers are advised not to make any arrangements until the request has been considered by the school.

Should parents take their children out of school despite the request being unauthorised, a Penalty Notice could be issued by North Somerset Education Welfare Service as following:

- £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days.
- £120 per child per parent if paid within 28 days

*For example, 2 parents with 3 children would have to pay a total fine of £360.00 if paid within 21 days or £720.00 if paid between 21 and 28 days. The payment of any penalty notices will be directly to North Somerset Council and they will also follow up any non-payments.*

Other unauthorised absences not linked to a holiday in term time may also lead the school to request the issuing of the fixed Penalty Notices to parents/carers. This could include not informing school of a child's absence.

The above changes apply to all children in Years 1 – 6, and it also applies to Reception age children who are of statutory school age. Children reach statutory school age in the term (based on 'old' 3 term year) after they are 5, e.g. a child with a birthday between September and December (Autumn Term) is of statutory school age from January.

**Claire Pocock, Headteacher**

Reviewed: 2014/15 – Term 2  
Approved: Teaching & Learning Committee – 4 February 2015

**Dear Parent / Carer,**

**.....'s attendance at school for term ( ) of this academic year was ..... %. It is North Somerset guidance that the family or carers of any child whose attendance is below average are contacted in an effort to improve this. To that end I am writing to you to try and achieve this improvement.**

**We fully appreciate when a child is unwell they are not able to attend school and should stay at home. However, this letter is simply to inform you that unless the attendance record mentioned above improves it is possible other designated North Somerset staff (for example Education Welfare) may contact you for an explanation.**

**If you would like to talk about any of this or would like support in improving this matter then please contact myself via the school.**

**Yours sincerely,**

**Mrs Claire Pocock (Headteacher)**

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**If your child has an attendance rate of 80%, this is equal to almost 8 weeks of school in one year and 1 year over a 5 year period.**

Dear Parent,

It is school policy that 5 lates accumulated by a child in one term results in a letter home to highlight the situation and with the aim of improvement in this area. It also needs to be pointed out that this situation is regularly monitored and reviewed by the Education Welfare Officer.

..... has already been late ..... times during Term ....

Children who are regularly late often don't achieve to their full potential for a variety of reasons including organisation, feeling embarrassed and missing vital instructions. There's also the impact a late child has on the teaching and learning of the whole class to take into consideration.

If you would like to discuss this situation then please do contact the school. In the meantime Education Welfare will continue to monitor this and may contact you regarding an additional visit if the present number of times late does not improve.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Claire Pocock(Headteacher)

**If your child is late once a week this means that over the course of a year they will have been late approximately 38 times. Over 5 years, if they continue at a rate of being late once a week they will have been late 190 times which is the equivalent of being late every day for a whole year.**

**If your child is late three times a week this means that over the course of a year they will have been late approximately 114 times. Over 5 years, if they continue at a rate of being late three times a week they will have been late 342 times which is the equivalent of being late every day for 3 years.**