Belmont School

Attendance Policy

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Review	Annually

To be followed in conjunction with the updates from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

Introduction

Every child of compulsory school age is entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any Special Educational Needs they may have. Poor attendance is linked to lower academic outcomes and is always considered a potential indicator of a safeguarding concern. Belmont School has high expectations of attendance of all pupils. The School Attendance Policy aims to provide clear direction to parents, pupils and staff about expectations, procedures and policy on school attendance. This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the [DFE Guidance](#) on Working Together to Improve School Attendance (19th August 2024). The policy reflects Belmont School's commitment to improving outcomes and best practice in supporting pupils. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that attendance monitoring and actions are addressed in ways that prioritise the student's wellbeing and maximises their opportunity for academic success. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Behaviour Policy and the Safeguarding Policy.

Our aims;

- To make the improvement of individual and collective attendance a priority for all Pupils, parents/carers, staff and other stakeholders.
- To support all pupils to achieve above 90% attendance as a minimum
- To work with each pupil and their family as an individual and improve their attendance by removing barriers to learning
- Monitor attendance data on a daily, weekly and termly basis and put interventions in place if patterns are beginning to emerge.

We endeavour to fulfil these aims;

- By prioritising the improvement of whole school attendance as a key component in school development plans and underpinning school's vision and values
- By making sure that parents/carers are aware of the clear link between good attendance and academic achievement and their legal responsibility to work with school on this matter
- By including reviews of attendance data at relevant meetings including senior leadership meetings and whole staff meetings.
- By using school data management and interdepartmental-working to quickly identify pupils at risk of become persistently absent (below 90%) and intervene at the earliest stage
- Members of the SLT will analyse and feedback to governors attendance data on a half termly basis and this will inform and lead actions both on an individual case basis and also on the school development plan.
- By involving parents/carers and pupils in decisions about their education and progress

School have members of staff whose roles have a clear focus on attendance, however promoting positive school attendance is a whole-school priority. There are various ways staff support good attendance throughout the school and this can include:

- Identifying potential issues as early as possible, work directly in partnership with parents/carers to resolve them
- Monitoring attendance and ensuring safeguarding policies are followed where concerns are identified
- Promoting excellent attendance from the point of induction, ensuring every family and child understand school's commitment to attendance from the first day on roll
- Ensuring parents regularly receive copies of attendance data held for their child
- Senior leaders promoting effective partnerships with the LA Attendance Team and other services and agencies to effective remove barriers to learning and promote good attendance.
- Designated key staff acting as liaison with individual agencies to support attendance
- Carrying out thorough and recorded interventions before referring to the Local Authority in the event a pupil drops below 90%
- Gathering and recording relevant information to enable local authority intervention to be effective and meaningful
- Encouraging active involvement of other services and agencies in the life of the school
- Recognising the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence or an ingrained habit of low attendance at school.
- Celebrating excellent attendance in school-wide assemblies and celebrations and ensure we recognise improvements, however small, in order to build confidence and self-esteem of the pupil and promote the link between attendance and success

Procedures

- **First Day Absence** - If a child is absent for any reason, parents/carers are expected to let the school know as soon as possible. <u>Notifying school of the reason for absence is the responsibility of the parent/carer.</u> This information will be placed on the register when it has been received. School require ideally a minimum of two emergency contact numbers to be held on file.

  We have a commitment to actively pursue each pupil's attendance by a system of daily phone calls and/or text messages at close of register (see appendix 1). Each pupil and family is an individual and our response to non-attendance depends on their own circumstances. Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school for a variety of reasons and resolving each issue may include close working across departments and external agencies.

  Where Pupils are attending alternative education placements on agreed plans, the provider will inform the Alternative Provision Co-Ordinator of the Pupil's presence or absence daily. This can be done by an agreed mechanism, such as a phone call or email daily. If a parent/carer knows that their child is unable to attend their placement they must inform the

school. The DSL or Alternative Provision lead will carry out a regular quality assurance visit to check attendance, behaviour and attainment.

Pupils attending work experience will be checked upon daily and the appropriate mark recorded

Occasionally it may be agreed that a child can be placed on a temporary phased or adapted timetable. These arrangements are, for example, put in place to reintegrate a pupil back to the school following an unavoidable absence. These timetables would only be put in place in specific circumstances and negotiated through meetings including all key stakeholders involved with the pupil or through reintegration meetings and any adaptations to timetables must be agreed by the Head of School. These arrangements are time-limited and kept under review with the aim that Pupil will return to full time education as soon as possible. The school will work with the relevant agencies and bodies to ensure that the needs of the individual are met.

Recording

Registers are legal records and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name and title of the person who made the amendment. (DfE 2022)

Belmont School will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with the local authority, or the parent, that the pupil will attend the school. Attendance data and pupil admissions are recorded on the school's information management system, i-Sams. Records will be kept for a three year period from the date of entry. This system will display attendance using the national attendance codes. These will be input onto the register by form tutors and any amendments made will be completed by office administration staff or the family liaison officer when reasons for absence are established. Every absence (am/pm) will be classified as authorised or unauthorised. School uses the following codes;

- **Coding System**
  ISAMs has now changed as of the 19th August 2024. Please see Appendix 1 in connection with codes.

  This Policy is also to be read in connection with Recording Nature of Absence on Attendance Marks as well as Recording Reason for Change of Attendance Marks.

- **Children Missing From Education**

A Pupil going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and family support officer will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where Pupils go missing on repeated occasions. Belmont School follows DfE legal requirements for schools in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination and work closely with Local Authority Attendance Teams. Where a Pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence and responsible steps have been taken by Belmont School to establish the whereabouts without success, the Attendance Officer will make an immediate referral to the Early Help Team and this will be treated as a safeguarding concern (see Safeguarding policy).

If the child is not found, the Attendance Team will complete a Child Missing from Education form (CME). The child's name will be entered onto the Children Missing from Education Register, which is held centrally in accordance with the LA Children Missing from Education Procedural Guidance. After four school weeks (20 school days) should such efforts to locate the child prove to be unsuccessful and confirmation has been received from the Attendance Team that they are aware of the Child, they can be removed from roll.

Attendance Intervention

Belmont School has a dedicated family support officer who can work with the pupil and family at the early stages as soon as concerns are identified to encourage and support good attendance, including addressing barriers to attendance and accessing relevant support from other departments in school such as the SENCo, therapists and Pastoral support. Those pupils whose attendance starts to decline due to regular unexplained absence will be subject to discussion at the weekly attendance meetings. Strategies to improve attendance will be discussed and interventions recorded at each stage of intervention. Where intervention fails to rectify the reasons for absence, the persistent absence plan will be triggered and more intensive support offered.

Persistent Absence

Ultimately, school's aim is to identify patterns of absence, intervene early and put in place targeted meaningful support. For those pupils whose attendance falls below 90% without clear authorised reasons, the pupil will be classified as having Persistent Absence (PA) and where unauthorised absence is recorded, school may apply to the local authority to initiate absence penalties. Attendance data is reviewed on a half termly basis and pupils falling into Persistent Absence will be identified at these reviews. Formal processes are important to give families adequate time and opportunities to address persistent absence through a three stage process.

Stage 1 – the pupil's family will be notified of the concerns in writing. The Family Liaison Officer will meet with the family to discuss this and any barriers to attendance. If the child has a social worker, the social worker will also be included in these discussions, along with the local authority Virtual School

Stage 2 – the family will be notified of escalating concerns in writing. A Persistent Absence Plan will be formulated with time-limited targets and a referral completed to the Pupil Absence Support Team (PAST). Records of interventions offered will be recorded on the pupil's file and will form evidence for any future prosecution or referral

Stage 3 – the family will be notified in writing of the referral to Lancashire County Council for the issue of a [fixed penalty notice](). Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Daily Procedure

Register closes at 9.30am

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Review of absence codes to identify all pupils not in attendance.

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Where reason for absence has been provided, code and clear notes to be entered to reflect the reason on iSams

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Text to all parent/carer of absent pupils to notify of absence and request reason is provided to the school office before 10am if this has not yet been provided

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Calls to parent/carer of absent pupils where reason for absence has still not been provided

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Where it has not been possible to establish a reason for absence, the following procedures will be followed;

- If applicable, the pupil's social worker will be notified
- If there are safeguarding concerns, a home visit will take place by the DSL or deputy on the first day of absence and a police welfare check may be requested
- If there are no safeguarding concerns but the pupil does not return to school the following day, a third-day home visit will be conducted in order to complete a welfare check