

11<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## **National Changes to Attendance Guidance**

Dear Parent/Carer,

I wanted to write to you to explain the changes that have been agreed by the Department for Education (DfE) regarding attendance and the new and revised expectations for schools and Local Authorities (LA). The statutory guidance comes into effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 so that all schools, across the country, can implement a consistent approach for all school-age children.

As a school, we will continue to work hard with all our children to try to avoid penalty notices, whilst ensuring that all of our children make excellent progress, supported by exceptional attendance.

Changes to the attendance guidance have been made in four areas:

### 1. A NEW National Framework for Attendance Penalty Notices:

Any attendance penalty notices issued after the 19.08.2024 will be issued in line with the new guidance and regulations. The new Penalty Notice regulations include:

- A fine amount of £160.00 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days. The fine will be reduced to £80.00 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days for a first offence.
- Each parent/carer being issued a separate penalty notice for each child who is absent. For example, two parents and three children – each parent will receive x3 penalty notices for £160.00, with a family total of £960.00 in fines.
- The next time that an offence occurs, within three years of the date of the first penalty notice being issued, the fine amount will be £160.00 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days with no reduction.
- The third time an offence occurs, this will be presented to the Magistrate's court with no penalty notice issued.

This will include Term Time Leave fines and irregular attendance. Term time leave does not just include holidays.

Where a child is absent and it is believed that they are absent due to term time leave, Bramley Sunnyside Junior School will be expected to conduct a home visit and see the child or children on or before the 3rd day of school absence.

For irregular attendance – each school day has two sessions where children can attend – a morning and an afternoon session. Where a child has unauthorised absence of ten sessions or more in any 10-week period, we must consider escalation to prosecution. We will consider the reasons for absence, support already offered and the engagement of children and their families when making decisions. Please note that the ten sessions could be made up of term time leave, unauthorised late marks (given after registers close in a morning or afternoon session) and/or unauthorised absence.

Given the changes communicated above, it is very important to notify us every day that your child is absent, providing a reason, and where appropriate evidence of medical appointments and/or prescribed medication. We will continue to consider the NHS guidance 'Health protection in children and young people settings, including education – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and 'Is my child too ill for school? – NHS (www.nhs.uk) when making our decision whether or not to authorise absence due to illness.

## 2. Updates to the Working Together to Improve Attendance Guidance:

The DfE have updated the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' guidance (which applies from 19.08.2024 and is available on the DfE website.) This clarifies the expectations for parent/carers, schools and the LA to promote the importance of regular attendance at school and to provide ideas for support and interventions when a young person is not attending school on a regular basis.

## 3. Regulation Changes to School Attendance Registers:

Changes are being made to the attendance coding that schools use for attendance registers. The H code for authorised term time leave (holiday) has been removed and head teachers can no longer authorise term time leave unless there are exceptional circumstances covered by the C code. There is a requirement that an attendance penalty notice must be requested if there are five or more days of unauthorised absence for a student.

**Lateness is not acceptable as it disrupts lessons and may lead to more serious absence. School staff will monitor a child's lateness and may use a range of actions as follows:**

- **Class staff to monitor lateness and minutes lost**
- **Minutes lost/lateness letter sent to parents**
- **Meeting with parents to discuss reasons for lateness and how school can support improved timekeeping**

**Children arriving after the normal start of the school day must report to the main school office where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The register will close 30 minutes after the register has been taken (DfE August 2024). Children arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence. Our school doors open at 08:30 for children to be promptly registered at 08:40. Any children arriving between 08:40 and 09:10 will be marked as late (code L) and any children arriving after 09:10 will be marked as late after registration (code U).**

**For example;**

**Child A arrives in the morning at 08:50 – L code received but attendance remains at 100%**

**Child B arrives in the morning at 09:20 – U code received and attendance is 50%**

## 4. Regulations will come into force on the 19th August 2024 to mandate attendance data sharing by all state funded schools:

This means that your child's attendance will be shared with the DfE and the LA every day. This will allow the DfE to provide schools with the tools to monitor and improve attendance and will allow the LA to provide further advice and support. It will also allow tracking of attendance trends e.g. a child reported as ill the same day each week/week of each year or a certain year group or cohort with patterns of absence.

As always, the motivation with these changes is supporting young people to access school each day and ensuring that they have any reasonable adjustments and/or interventions in place that support their success and engagement in learning.

If your child is finding attending school difficult, is feeling anxious about attending school, or needs further help in accessing their education, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us. We will be able to discuss with you any reasonable adjustments and support that can be/is in place for your child.

Attendance matters and children with higher levels of attendance tend to have improved experiences in school; with fewer gaps in their learning and improved outcomes. Working together, we have improved the attendance of a number of children this academic year and we will continue to work hard and in partnership with you and multi-agencies to ensure that all children can experience attendance success.

If you have any questions regarding any aspects of this letter, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us.

Further guidance and information for parents/carers linked to attendance is being updated on our website.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Laura Robson

*Learning Today...Leading Tomorrow*

*Flanderwell Lane, Bramley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S66 3QU*

*01709 542231 - [contact@bsjs.co.uk](mailto:contact@bsjs.co.uk) - [www.bsjs.co.uk](http://www.bsjs.co.uk) - @BramleyJunior*