

Brookland Junior School

'Be Kind, Be Respectful, Be the Best you can be'

Attendance Policy



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Written by: HCC adapted by the school	
Approved by: Governors	
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Attendance Statement

At Brookland Junior School, we want the whole school community - parents, pupils, staff and governors - to be committed to excellent standards of attendance and punctuality to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils.

Our attendance policy is underpinned by the fact that we are a Rights Respecting School and this policy is written in accordance with this ([UNCRC Article 3 - the best interests of the child must be the priority in all decisions made and Article 28- right to an education](#))

Aims

- To maximise attendance in order to ensure that all pupils have access to the full education offered by our school.
- To ensure whole school attendance is at least 96% or better.
- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.

Statutory Framework

A pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone call from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence.

An absence will only be authorised if the school is satisfied with the explanation offered.

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

This policy is written in line with the local authority policy on school attendance.

Responsibilities

The Headteacher will have overall responsibility for attendance at Brookland Junior. However, improving attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – parents, pupils and all staff. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually, appropriately dressed and ready to learn.
- Instilling in their children, an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- Ensuring that they are aware of the school's Attendance Policy.
- Impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- Taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending Parents' Consultation evenings and other relevant meetings.
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.
- Informing the school by 9.00am on the first day of any absence the reasons for this absence – this can be done by phone call, answer message on the absence line or by email to admin@brooklandjm.herts.sch.uk.
- Informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- Ensuring their child has had 48 hours without sickness and/or diarrhea before they return to school.
- Avoiding making medical, dental or other appointments within school hours.
- Not taking days out of school for reasons not seen as exceptional.

- Not taking or booking holidays in term time
- Calling on staff for help when they need it.
- Communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support.

Pupils will:

- Attend school regularly and punctually

Teaching Staff will:

- Set an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Implement the school's attendance policy.
- Complete registers correctly and keep them up-to-date at all times
- Monitor class and individual attendance patterns and inform the Headteacher if they notice any low attendance or deterioration in attendance
- Informing the school office of any concerns regarding attendance.
- Inform parents early if they notice any low or deterioration in attendance.
- Emphasise with children the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Treat pupils with dignity.
- Build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries.
- Take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence handling confidential information sensitively.
- Understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
- Registers are legal documents and MUST be completed fully and kept up-to-date. They must be marked twice a day at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools should use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education.
- When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised absence (N).

The School Office will:

- Maintain attendance and absence records electronically.
- Send out requests for explanations for absence if none have been forthcoming.
- Maintain a register of children who have regular absences in order to aid monitoring by the Headteacher and Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO from HCC) / Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Contact parents on the first day of absence for any child with an unexplained absence and ask for an explanation of the absence.
- Call on the first day of any absence, any child who is on the regular absence list.
- Notify the Headteacher when children on this register are absent.
- Prepare attendance reports termly for the Governing Body.
- Provide information to the Headteacher to identify poor and good attenders.
- Liaise with parents/carers and children directly in supporting attendance
- If a 'N' is marked in the register, any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established
- Include attendance information with each child's annual report giving information regarding absences that the pupil has accrued during that school year

The Headteacher / Senior Leaders will:

- Offer a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by all staff, pupils and families.
- Make sure all staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Ensure that all personnel are trained on safeguarding, the Prevent strategy and other relevant training to comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that all pupils understand its importance.
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
- Empower all staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- To discuss the impact of low attendance on learning with parents/carers at consultation meetings where appropriate.
- Make sure that Governors have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.
- Ensure that all staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk.
- Liaise with the Attendance Improvement Officer in taking action for any child whose attendance is causing concern.
- Work with parents and children directly in supporting attendance.
- Consider authorisation for holiday requests where there is an exceptional circumstance

Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) will:

- Monitor the attendance of each child each term (on their caseload).
- Meet with the head teacher to discuss any necessary action.
- Complete monitoring forms each term indicating actions to be taken.
- Liaise with the school if the child remains an open case to the LAAO or where any legal action is being taken.
- Advise the school on strategies for improving attendance.
- Assist the school in identifying persistent absentees and ensuring plans of action are in place

The Governing Body will:

- Under the Education (Pupil registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for ensuring that the school maintains an attendance register that records pupil presence at the start of morning and afternoon sessions for each school day.
- It will also indicate whether absence is authorized or unauthorised.

Registration

- The School gates are opened at 8:40am and pupils are then expected to enter the school building via the school gates and make their way to their classroom.
- Registers will be taken at 8.55am. The afternoon register will then be taken between 1:15pm-1:25pm. They must be marked in accordance with the list of symbols set out and recorded via Arbor.
- Pupils who arrive between 8.50am and 8.55am will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session (Code L). After 8:55am, children need to sign in via the electronic inventory system in the front office.
- Registers close at 8.55am and at 1:25pm for all year groups. If a pupil does not arrive before the register is closed, he /she will be marked as "absent".
- Children who arrive after 8.55 am must be signed in by school for purposes of emergency evacuation etc.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 8:55am and parent provides a satisfactory explanation, will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).

Following up lateness

Parents whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher. Opportunities and suggestions will be put in place to improve punctuality. File copies are retained in the child's individual records and any letters issued are saved on our school's CPOMS system. If the situation does not improve, the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAO) may become involved.

*If a pupil is persistently late a letter will be sent to parents as a reminder to be punctual. Should lateness persist the Headteacher will contact parents.

Punctuality

It is of great importance that children are punctual in order to access Early Morning Work (EMW) which revises pre-taught concepts and allows the children to practice their key skills. Registration also precedes the teacher outlining the morning's core learning to the class. Pupils arriving late disturb the class, cause extra work for teaching and administrative staff and have an unsettled start to their own school day. Completed registers are saved on Arbor Management Information System (MIS) at 8:50am.

Notifying us of a child's absence

If your child is absent from school please:

1. Telephone the school office immediately, leave a message on absence line or email in to admin@brooklandjm.herts.sch.uk
2. Telephone or email the school office at the beginning of each day of absence or as advised by office team during your initial call.

You are required to give a reason explaining your child's absence. Please do not be offended if you are asked for specific details regarding the absence as this is a requirement

* Please note that the office deals with explanations for absence, a verbal explanation to the class teacher is not enough.

If there is no explanation:

1. The school will contact you by telephone.
2. If there is no response the school will send a text message requesting an explanation.
3. Depending on the individual case, members of school visit may do a home visit to ascertain where the child is.
4. If there is still no satisfactory explanation the school may discuss the case with the Local Authority Attendance Officer and the child's absence will be unauthorized and/or if necessary and depending on the case, children's services may be contacted.

Absences

Notification must be provided for **all** absences from school.

- If your child is absent from school for any reason, a telephone call to the school office must be made on the morning of absence **before** 9.00am on our designated absence line. A message can be left to provide information regarding any absence and is available 24 hours a day.
- In addition to this, parents can also contact the school by email admin@brooklandjm.herts.sch.uk with the subject line 'ABSENCE'.
- Any absence reported after 9:00am will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Absences are authorised by the designated staff within the school.
- School may decide **not** to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided.
- If the school does not hear from parents/carers explaining the absence then a first response strategy will be used. A member of staff will ring you to find out the reason for absence. Any concerns are reported to the Headteacher.
- If absence is recurring, following a pattern, or if there are concerns in general about attendance, a meeting will be held with the Headteacher to try and find a resolution.
- Doctor certificates may be requested for long term recurring sickness or medical conditions.

Registers are kept in electronic format and are monitored by individual class teachers, and fortnightly by the Headteacher, School Attendance Lead and the school office. In the event of a series of unauthorised absence or a pattern of absenteeism being noted, the Attendance Lead and Headteacher will decide what actions to take next.

No contact

If no message is received on the school absence line (which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or through the school office before 9am, then the absence for that session is recorded as unauthorised. All messages left on the school answer phone are recorded and documented by the office staff. The office staff will contact you during the morning in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy to ask the reason for absence, however this will still be recorded as unauthorised as no parental contact was made before 9 am.

Leaving and returning to school during the school day

When pupils leave or return to school during the school day, office staff must be notified. Parents must sign their child both in and out of school at the front entrance on our electronic sign in system.

Requests for holidays/special circumstances absence in term time

The school **WILL NOT** authorise any family holidays during term time.

In special circumstances, a request must be made to the Headteacher **at least three weeks before** the requested time is planned for.

Parents will need to email to the Headteacher via the school admin email, and a meeting may be arranged with the Headteacher to discuss the absence from school.

The Headteacher will consider the following before making a decision to authorise the absence:

- the time of year the absence is requested to take place (start and end of term, SATs weeks etc. are not encouraged)
- the attendance record of the child
- the late attendance record of the child
- the number of additional days holiday already taken
- the required progress the child is making in school

Categories of absence

Authorised Absence

Absence will be authorised if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or Headteacher of the school')
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs ([UNCRC - Article 14 - right to freedom of thought, belief and religion](#))
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for any of the following:
 - i) the child's transport to and from school,
 - ii) boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school, and
 - iii) enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- the pupil is the child of traveller parents and the conditions as stated in paragraph 47 of the guidance are met
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling)
- leave of absence may be granted by the school for exceptional circumstances where the family have to travel abroad

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming at all
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances)
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- the pupil is absent because a sibling is sick

NO HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME WILL BE AUTHORISED AND A PENALTY FINE MAY BE SENT TO PARENTS.

Persistent absence (PA)

- The DFE define a 'persistent absentee' as a pupil who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at **10%** or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised. The PA status may change as the terms progress but these pupils are at particular risk of achieving poor outcomes at school and beyond

Warning letters

The school will issue warning letters when there are concerns regarding attendance.

- In the first instance this will be when attendance has dropped below the national attendance target of 96%
- A second letter will be issued if attendance does not improve and the school will ask for medical proof to authorise any further illnesses. At this stage the school will ask to arrange a meeting with parents and the Headteacher to discuss any issues.

Local Authority Attendance Officer

Brookland Junior School works in partnership with the allocated Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school.

The Head teacher meets the LAAO on an agreed schedule.

The school works with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the LAAO, the school will make a formal referral to Children, Schools and Families.

The LAAO will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, LAAO's may also work with children whose absences have been authorised.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason.

Penalty Notices

Where a parent is deemed capable of securing their child's attendance but is not willing to take responsibility to do so, the LAAO will become involved. Meetings will be arranged to discuss the attendance problems. [\(UNCRC - Article 18 parental responsibilities and state assistance\)](#)

After **2** sessions of unauthorised absence, a letter will be sent to parents warning of a possible fine. **Please note** - at the beginning of each term a new letter will be sent if your child has had 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term.

15 sessions of unauthorised absence (7½ days) will trigger proceedings to a penalty notice. Please note that holidays taken in school term time will be **unauthorised**.

The Local Authority issues penalty notices on behalf of Hertfordshire schools to ensure consistency and in the event that a prosecution may need to be brought against the parent(s).

Should you receive a fine for persistent and / or unauthorised absence details are below:

£60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice.

£120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of notice.

If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority must prosecute for the offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or withdraw the notice.

Separate penalty notices will be sent to each parent that has day-to-day responsibility for bringing their children to school, meaning that **each** parent must pay a **separate** penalty.

Once issued, the Headteacher has the discretion to enforce this penalty notice from Herts County Council based on individual circumstances. **The Governors of Brookland Junior School fully support the decision of the Headteacher that once a Penalty notice is issued, the Headteacher will not renege on this decision.**

Publication of information

Parents, pupils, staff and governors are informed of whole school attendance issues and statistics on a regular basis.

Brookland Junior School shares information on individual pupil attendance as necessary with parents, pupils and staff.

Rewards for full attendance and punctuality

At Brookland Junior School, we reward pupils for 100% attendance. ([UNCRC- Article 29- Goals of Education](#)) To celebrate this achievement, pupils from each class achieving 100% attendance each term will be celebrated on the 'Attendance Tree' and will earn a certificate to recognize this achievement in a special attendance assembly led by the Headteacher.

Furthermore, as a school we value the commitment of the entire family in ensuring that their child attends school every day. Those achieving 100% attendance for the year will receive a special recognition award and be rewarded for their incredible efforts.