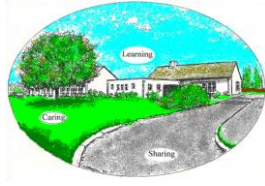


Byfleet Primary School

Attendance Policy

Updated: September 2019



Byfleet Primary School

Produced : March 2009
Reviewed: September 2019
Next Review : Autumn 2020

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission

Our values-based school nurtures curiosity and creativity through an inspiring, broad and engaging curriculum, where learning is at the heart of all that we do. Our children learn to become resilient and self-assured in an environment where safety is outstanding. Everyone is challenged and encouraged to thrive and achieve as individuals, preparing them for their role as caring and active citizens in modern Britain.

Vision statement

Byfleet is a Learning, Caring and Sharing school.

Commitment to Attendance

The staff of Byfleet Primary School are committed, in partnership with the parents / carers, pupils, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community are proud.

Regular attendance is key to achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters: staying healthy, enjoying and achieving, keeping safe, contributing to the community, and social and economic well-being. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we will encourage parents to ensure that their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

All pupils must:

- Attend school regularly.
- Attend school punctually at 8.45am.
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day.

All parents will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.20am or sooner if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.

- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

The school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's or parent's concerns.
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor individual pupil's attendance and punctuality.
- If the school has not heard by 9.20am from a parent, someone in the office will attempt to contact parents to establish a reason for the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils.
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- Meet regularly with the Inclusion Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the Inclusion Service may result in further actions, eg a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.
- Meet the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child – by ensuring that whenever possible, pupils are consulted in all the decisions that relate to them.

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time and whether the pupil is being collected.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and signed back in on their return (This must be completed using Sign In/Out process).
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site and complete the Sign In/Out process.

Punctuality / Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with a pupil's teacher is important. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time ready to enter the school building by 8.45am.

- Registration takes place at 8.45am and 1pm and pupils who arrive after the register has been taken will be recorded as late for school – coded 'L' on the registration certificate
- Registers close at (half an hour after the register opens) and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence – 'U' on the registration certificate - and can be subject to referral to the Inclusion Officer and possible prosecution by the Local Authority.
- Persistent lateness before close of register by a pupil will be dealt with through school.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform us soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next.
- The address of the new school.
- A new home address if appropriate.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and the Inclusion Service.

Authorised Absence

Absence will only be authorised by the Head Teacher for

- Genuine illness.
- Compassionate grounds or for exceptional circumstances.
- A date which is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parents belong.

Please note that any absence for illness that runs before or after this absence will not be authorised without medical evidence and could result in the absence becoming 5 days or more.

Request for Leave of Absence

- Leave of absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Where absence in term time is unavoidable, a Leave of Absence Application Form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Head Teacher on behalf of the school governors, **no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date**. The child's record of attendance will be taken into account (i.e. not below 100%).

Consideration will then be given only in the event of exceptional circumstances and if the application is sent by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

- If leave is taken in term time without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Inclusion Service will be notified.

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

- In line with the guidance from the DfE, absences during exam periods will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- The Local Authority will consider issuing a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more day's leave of absence without school authorisation.
- If the school is aware of previous unauthorised absences during the previous 6 weeks period at the time a request is put in for a leave of absence, that would take unauthorised absence over 10%, Surrey County Council will be informed and a warning letter may be issued.

Penalty Notices

In addition to Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised absences, Penalty Notices may also be issued when a pupil is stopped by Truancy Patrol or at the discretion of the Inclusion Officer if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance. This includes unauthorised absence due to late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

The Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- £60 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 (per parent per child) within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child per parent.

Deleting a Pupil from the Admission Register

As from September 2013, a school can delete a child's name from the admission register, where a pupil is granted leave of absence and the pupil fails to return to school within 10 days following the expiry of the period of leave granted, the head does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unable to attend by reason of sickness and where the school and LA have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the pupil is.

Truancy Patrol

When a pupil comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the pupil's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent / carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 schooldays, a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent / carer.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Failure to Ensure Regular School Attendance

may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Child's attendance proposed by the school and Inclusion Officer.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

- In the event of the need for authorisation of an absence, a Leave of Absence Application Form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Head Teacher on behalf of the school governors, **no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date.**