



IES BRECKLAND

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by the Governing Body September 2014

Chair of Governors:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Punter'.

IES Breckland Attendance Policy

Aims of the Attendance Policy

- to ensure that IES Breckland School is compliant with national regulations and guidance for recording pupil attendance and absence and for setting attendance targets;
- to ensure all pupils attend school for the maximum number of sessions possible;
- to ensure that pupils, staff and parents are aware of procedures to be followed as a consequence of absence;
- to ensure that any absence or late attendance is monitored and followed up according to agreed and consistent procedures;
- to ensure that any unauthorised absence is pursued by the school;
- to ensure that pupils attending off-site activities are registered at all times according to the correct national codes and within the spirit of the policy;
- to ensure that incentives / rewards for good and maximum attendance are part of the school routine.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.

The admission register and the attendance register of every school must be available for inspection during school hours by:

- any of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools in England appointed under section 1 (2) of the Education Act 2005[11];
- any additional inspector assisting the Chief Inspector in accordance with paragraph 2(1) of Schedule 1 to that Act;

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

If computers are used for attendance registration, back – up copies (paper or electronic) must be made and, like manual registers, kept for at least three years.

Registers matter because:

- they are legal documents which may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance;
- they provide the daily record of attendance for all pupils and this information can act as an early warning system for issues which may affect a child's welfare including child protection, being a young carer, illegal child employment, truancy, disaffection with school, special educational needs, illness, problems in school:
- the information they contain can act as a useful monitoring system for plans which are developed to support children in school, for example Pastoral Support Programmes or Individual Education Plans where regular and punctual attendance may be part of the planned action, or to support children at home when regular attendance may be one of the goals set within a child protection plan for a child who is registered on the Child Protection Register;
- they contribute information to pupils' reports and to leavers' references.

Principles

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Some children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending.

This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The school has a duty in law to refer any absence of 8 unauthorised sessions (4 days) or more in any given period where they have been unable to make contact with the parent / child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service.

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. These include:

- *parents keeping children off school unnecessarily (including term time holiday);*
- *truancy before or during the school day;*
- *absences which have never been properly explained;*
- *children who arrive at school too late to get a mark. Arriving after the register closes at 8.40a.m. will count as unauthorised.*

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the appropriate staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful.

He / she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support. If other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, the Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for attendance matters at IES Breckland is allocated as follows:

- for making first day contact with parent / carer for all pupils absent without known reason – Head of Learning Support;
- for analysing individual pupil data to identify quickly patterns of absence which cause concern – Head of Learning support;
- for setting clear trigger points for higher levels of intervention which are consistently applied - Head of Learning Support/Leadership;

- for having school attendance panels for pupils causing significant concern – Head of Learning Support / EWO;
- for a range of reward systems which are developmentally appropriate for pupils with high levels of attendance and those who are improving – the Mentor / SLT;
- for a clear system for reporting concerns about non-attendance to the Education Welfare Officer – Head of Learning Support;
- for a service level agreement with the Education Welfare Service – School Business Manager;
- for partnership working with the local authority to ensure appropriate use of legal interventions to reinforce parental responsibility - Principal / Head of Learning Support
- for implementing parental and pupil support for non-attendance where parenting is thought to be a contributory factor to deteriorating attendance – Mentor / Head of Learning Support
- for an overall lead on attendance and implementation of this policy - the named governor (link pastoral governor) and Pastoral Leadership Member.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1. Illness and Other Legitimate Reasons

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents are asked to contact the school on every first day of absence by 8.40 am. Parents are asked to inform school by phone if a child is absent and keep the school informed if the absence continues. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. In exceptional circumstances, if a student's attendance is becoming a concern, (normally below 90%) further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested (see attendance flowchart attached). Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. There are, of course, entirely legitimate reasons for pupil absence and it is important that all parents are aware of the occasions when the school can record an absence as 'authorised'.

- The absence is with the school's approval i.e. the school has agreed to the absence in advance.
- A pupil is unable to attend through illness or medical treatment. The school is entitled to ask all pupils attending medical appointments for documents to prove the condition/treatment and these must be supplied preferably before the appointment date.
- An absence falls on a day of religious observance (and you are a member of this religion).
- The pupil is eligible for school transport, the school is more than three miles from your home and the Local Authority has failed to make the transport available.
- The Pupil is registered to travel on the IES Breckland Minibus and IES Breckland have failed to make the transport available.

The final decision to record an absence as 'authorised' rests with the school.

2. First Day Contact

If a pupil is absent for the first session of the day and the school has not received an explanation for the absence, the Head of Learning Support will contact parents/carers on home, mobile, work and emergency contact numbers; messages will be left on answerphones and a return phone call is

expected. If telephone contact cannot be made, a letter will be posted on the first day. All unexplained absences will be unauthorised.

3. Holidays

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Exceptional leave of absence will only be granted in the following cases:

- To attend an immediate family member's funeral
- For leave to be spent with parent/carer who is service personnel and has just returned from active duty.

Should a holiday not be authorised and a parent chooses still to take it, according to Government guidelines they open themselves up to the possibility of receiving a Penalty Notice monetary fine.

The Governors of IES Breckland have voted to enable the Principal to levy such notices if he/she feels it appropriate. Furthermore, pupils can be deleted from the school register if they fail to return from extended leave of absence:

- within 10 school days; and
- without good reason.

4. Lateness

Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for that session, unless the lateness is unavoidable.

Lateness will also be recorded and, again, will be recorded as unauthorised unless the school has been informed of, and agreed to authorise the reasons given. All late arrivals must report to the School Office. Parents are expected to ensure that pupils are present for the first session of the day. A late mark is awarded if arrival is between 8.15 and 9.00 am. After 8.40 a.m. lateness without an explanatory letter counts as unauthorised absence. Mentors will follow up persistent lateness to school involving a stepped level of support culminating in a meeting with the Head of Learning Support/Pastoral Leadership

Monitoring and Evaluation

At IES Breckland data and other information will be used to improve school and pupil performance by:

- benchmarking overall school absence against other schools in similar circumstances;
- regularly monitoring progress towards attendance targets;
- collecting and analysing attendance data frequently (e.g. weekly) to identify causes and patterns of absence;
- understanding and using data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions;
- considering the link between an individual's attendance and their attainment;
- using good practice from other schools and sharing our own good practice;
- using Ofsted advice on improving attendance;
- using all the materials and expertise available through the national behaviour and attendance strategy.

Pupil attendance will be reviewed every half term. Pupils of concern will be identified and contact with home will be made by the school. Parents of Pupils with attendance of less than 95% will be

told of absence concern by mentor. Pupils with attendance of less than 92% or will receive a letter of concern. If the school intervention does not cause significant improvement and an individual pupil's attendance remains below 92% without good reason, a referral to the EWO will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent being invited to an attendance meeting with the Head of Learning Support and EWO or receiving Penalty Notice or, ultimately, a prosecution.

The school has set the following school targets. All pupils that achieve 98% attendance (without any late arrivals) will receive recognition at the end of each term. Any pupil achieving 100% attendance for each term will receive a certificate. Pupils who have significantly improved their attendance will also receive a letter home at the end of each half term.

Policy Review

The policy will be regularly reviewed following Department of Education's advice on attendance and will be monitored by the Governing Body. Rates of attendance and absence will be reported regularly to the Governing Body, which will monitor progress against overall attendance targets.

ATTENDANCE FLOWCHART

Under 95% report periodically run and any student identified flagged to mentor to mention in calls home.



Attendance to be monitored and if drops below 93%, letter 1 is sent home to parent outlining our concerns.



If attendance drops below 90% letter 2 is sent to parents explaining no further authorised absence without medical evidence.



EWO to continue fortnightly visits and identify with Head of Learning Support any students that need to have a penalty notice or whether parent and student meeting with EWO/Head of Learning Support needs to happen to put in place a fast track attendance agreement.