



## **Brandesburton Primary School Attendance Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

All parents/carers who have children of compulsory school age are responsible in law for ensuring that their children receive an efficient education, "suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs which they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise" (Section 7 Education Act 1996).

### **2. Aims and Objectives**

- To promote regular school attendance in order for every child to reach their full educational potential.
- To provide an effective monitoring system to safeguard children's welfare.
- To promote an effective dialogue between school, parent/carers and outside agencies.
- To set in place systems for registration and attendance in order to protect children both inside school and out.
- To provide guidelines on sensitive approaches to deal with the needs of individual pupils; to agree procedures for a child's return to school, including reintegrating long-term absentees.
- To work with parent/carers and also to be a supporter of family life.

### **3. Punctuality**

**The school day starts at 8:55am. However, in order to facilitate a prompt start to the day the school doors are opened at 8:40am. All teachers are on duty in the classrooms at this time. Anyone arriving after this time must report to the main school reception to register.**

The register will be kept open until 9.30 a.m. Children arriving during this period will be marked as late and should be brought to reception by a parent/carer. Pupils arriving after 9:30am. will be marked unauthorised absence. The afternoon session begins at 1.15 p.m. and the register is called immediately. Pupils arriving between 1:15 pm. and 1:30 pm. will be marked as late. Any pupil arriving after the close of register at 1:30pm. will be marked as unauthorised absence. Patterns of late attendance or unauthorised absence will be investigated and may need to be referred to the school's Educational Welfare Officer as there may be grounds for concern. In extreme cases, prosecution of parent/carers may ensue.

### **4. Attendance Codes**

Different codes are used to indicate the reason for absence. These may include for example being educated off site, exclusion, family holiday not agreed, illness, interview, medical appointment, religious observance and unauthorised absence etc.

### **5. Fixed Penalty Notice Information & Unauthorised Absence**

The Local Authority has brought to the attention of every school in East Riding of Yorkshire the new powers in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to tackle poor school attendance.

A Penalty Notices may be issued for pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e. any absences that the school has not given permission for). These can be levied per pupil, per parent, per week of absence. A week can be accumulative over a school year. Parents should check with the Local Authority for current rates. Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absence developing. They will be issued simply by post to a pupil's home.

Cases of absence without acceptable cause will also include:

- pupils caught on truancy sweeps
- **unauthorised absence in school term time** and
- persistent late attendance after the register has closed.

It means that any parent/carer of a pupil with a level of unauthorised absence may now have a potential liability in the form of a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority.

Parent/Carers have also been made aware of changes to the school's policy on holidays in term time.

Parents/carers may request up to 10 days absence from school from the Head Teacher. This will however only be granted if the request meets one of the following criteria:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad (documentary evidence must be supplied).
- Child or parent's rehabilitation of medical/emotional issues (a letter from the GP must accompany this application).
- Emigration investigation (documentary evidence must be supplied).
- Family wedding, funeral or significant family celebration out of the area (documentary evidence must be supplied). The request must be reasonable and not an excessive request. Travel to and from the event would be authorised but not an attached holiday.
- Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances the Headteacher will consult with the Principal Education Welfare Officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. The Principal Education Welfare Officer will discuss each case with an independent Headteacher and will make a recommendation to the referring school.

**Parent/Carers are encouraged to work with the school to reduce the number of term time absences. Whereas attendance at Brandesburton Primary School is excellent any absence from school cannot be caught up. The time is lost.** Parent/carers are required to submit an absence form before booking a holiday, if the possibility of unauthorised absence is to be avoided and a fine.

The school does however wish to work with parent/carers and also to be a supporter of family life. Parents should discuss arrangements wherever possible with the head teacher.

#### **6. Examples of Absence Which Can Be Authorised**

Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence. Absence should be authorised if:-

- The pupil is absent with leave.
- The pupil is ill to the point at which work is not possible or is highly infectious to other children or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carers belong.
- The school at which the pupil is registered is not within walking distance of their home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the L.A. for the pupil's transport to and from school.
- The pupil is the child of traveller parent/carers who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has given leave of absence.
- The pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school.
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion e.g. a family wedding.
- Leave of absence is granted (according to the criteria above) by the Headteacher for a family holiday of no more than 10 school days. Parent/carers should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right that the Headteacher will agree to a family holiday during term time.

#### **7. Further Examples of Unauthorised Absence**

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent/carer.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is staying at home to mind the house or look after siblings.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions e.g. the pupil's birthday.
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday for a period of time longer than that negotiated with the Headteacher and does not return when agreed unless due to unavoidable circumstances.
- The pupil is on a family holiday without permission or if the parent/carers have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and, instead, seek retrospective approval on their return.

Parent/carers should inform the school of a child's absence as early as possible each day the child does not attend. Where no notification is received by 9:30 am. for the morning session or 1:30 pm. for the afternoon session, the school will endeavour to contact parent/carers to ascertain that the child is safe.

## **8. Absence as An Indicator of Child Abuse**

The school is aware that child absence could be an indicator of child abuse and will do everything to ensure a child is safe if there are concerns of potential child abuse.

## **9. East Riding of Yorkshire Authority Policy and the implementation and interpretation of this Policy by Brandesburton Primary School**

### **Term Time Holidays Policy and Procedures**

#### **Introduction**

The policy outlined below has been agreed by both the primary and secondary school behaviour and attendance partnerships in the East Riding of Yorkshire and is aimed at supporting schools in managing requests from parents for term time holidays. It is intended to make this process clearer and more consistent. This policy is linked with the penalty notice code of conduct that all head teachers and the local authority have agreed to work within.

#### **Background**

Schools are required to provide education for 190 days a year and it is expected that children who are registered at a school will attend for this time. Parents do not have an automatic right for their children to have time off school to go on a holiday; this is entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Statistics show that only 36 per cent of pupils in secondary schools with more than 12 days absence achieve five GCSE's at A-C grade (national target for all pupils), compared to 91 per cent with an average of six days absence. The trend is similar for the end of key stage two SATs results. (2012 data)

During the 2008/09 academic year **80,404** days of education were lost to term time holidays in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

In response, the Primary and Secondary School Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships developed a cross phase joint Policy and Procedures on Term Time Holidays which was underpinned by the Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct and was implemented in September 2010.

The introduction of this policy and procedure has seen a reduction in term time holidays. Therefore, the message is clearly getting across to parents that their child's education is important and their family holidays should not result in their child missing out on the education provided to them. Since the introduction of the policy in September 2010 the number of days lost due to holiday absence by the end of the 2010/2011 academic year had reduced to **46,482** days.

The policy contained the agreement to review and refresh the policy annually based on experience and outcomes.

The revised policy (Appendix2) introduces a criterion for Headteachers to authorise absence for a family holiday, this being extenuating circumstances. This has come from piloting the policy and experience. The Head teacher would discuss the circumstance with the Principal Education Welfare Officer who would then discuss with an independent Head teacher and feedback to the originating Head teacher. In addition, Headteachers will also be able to consider authorisation for an annual holiday for children of Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad.

The Term Time Holiday Policy developed by the Primary and Secondary School Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships has been adopted by the majority of schools and is showing significant reductions in levels of term time holidays being taken. The revised policy will help reduce levels of term time holidays and with Governing Body support will help emphasise the importance of school attendance.

#### **General Principles**

The following general principles underpin this policy:

- (i) The principles of honesty, openness, transparency and the spirit of co-operation underpin the proposals.
- (ii) All schools within the East Riding agree to follow the policies through to penalty notice if appropriate. This will ensure that the policy is applied in a consistent manner and provides equity for all parents and schools.
- (iii) Support of this policy from the local authority will be as a partner in both the primary and secondary behaviour and attendance partnerships. The inclusion and access services of the Council will ensure other local authority departments are aware of and include the philosophy of this policy in their practice.

- (iv) Where a holiday absence request form is not submitted, absences will not be authorised retrospectively. In these circumstances the penalty notice code of conduct must be followed.
- (v) Data from each individual school in relation to term time holidays will be monitored by the local authority and shared with schools and the partnerships. This will allow the partnerships to assess the impact of this policy.
- (vi) The behaviour and attendance partnerships will review this policy annually.

### **Policy**

Requests for term time holidays will normally only be considered in the following circumstances-

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad.
2. Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. Where parents are considering emigration and wish to visit the country as part of their consideration.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral or significant family celebration of a close member of the family that is taking place out of the area and is part of a family holiday. *(At Brandesburton this is extended to include significant family events out of the area. This would include for example a Grandparent's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday or a Golden wedding anniversary, but not a cousin's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday party or a pupil's own birthday. Similarly it would not include an attached holiday.)*
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances the Headteacher will consult with the Principal Education Welfare Officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent. The Principal Education Welfare Officer will discuss each case with an independent Headteacher and will make a recommendation to the referring school.

Evidence would be required in each case.

The partnerships have agreed that holidays will not, **under any circumstances** (including those listed above) be authorised at the following times-

1. The first six weeks of any academic year (applies to all pupils). *(This is strongly discouraged at Brandesburton, but if a parent can prove that there is absolutely no alternative and it is not the beginning of the Foundation Year, the Head Teacher may use his discretion to sanction an absence)*
2. Year six transition day (for pupils in year six). *(At Brandesburton Primary School this would be allowed if alternative arrangements can be made.)*
3. Year Six SATs week (for pupils in year six). At Brandesburton Primary School Year 6 pupils will not be granted absence at any time between the Easter holiday and the end of the SATs week.
4. At any time specified by the school (this will be communicated to parents by each school).

### **Looked After Children**

This policy applies to all children, including those who are Looked After Children. The council has an agreed procedure for Children and Young People's Support and Safeguarding Area Managers. The Head teacher will only approve a Term Time Holiday for a Looked After Child in accordance with Children, Family & Adult

### **Publicity and Awareness Raising**

The local authority will publicise the cross-phase agreement to parents through the media and the publication of leaflets.

Schools will produce leaflets and include information in newsletters etc, as agreed by the partnership.

### **Procedures**

Schools will retain a supply of term time absence request forms and give to parents, together with the Term Time Absence Information for Parents, as required. The policy, information on term time absences and request forms will also be available on the Council's website.

Parents must return the form to the Headteacher or to the senior member of school staff that the Headteacher has delegated this decision making to.

If siblings or other children living in the same household (of compulsory school age) are known and identified on the absence request form and attend an East Riding of Yorkshire school, the head teachers from both schools must reach a joint decision regarding the parent's request within five school days of receiving the holiday request form. This will ensure an East Riding of Yorkshire wide consistent approach.

The Headteacher will decide if the request should be authorised or unauthorised using the 'Term Time Absence Decision Making Flowchart' and the principles within this policy.

Holiday absences taken during term time will be marked-

- 'G' if it is an unauthorised absence for a family holiday, or sessions in excess of agreement.
- 'H' if it is an authorised absence for a family holiday

### **Authorised Holiday Requests**

The Headteacher must write to the parent who has made the request, informing them of the decision, the date of the child's last school day before the holiday and the date the school expect the child to return to school. Within the letter it should be clear how the absence will be marked on the child's attendance certificate. The letter should also make clear that no more absence due to term time holidays will be authorised during the same academic year. A copy of the letter should be sent to any parent who does not have day to day care and responsibility of the child but does have parental responsibility. A copy of both letters will go on the child's school file.

### **Unauthorised Holiday Requests**

The Headteacher will write to the parent who has made the request, informing them of the decision and the reason why this was made. The letter will clearly highlight that if the parent decides to take the child on the holiday, the absences will be unauthorised and a penalty notice will be issued to each parent with day to day care and responsibility for each child. A term time holiday leaflet will be enclosed with the letter. A copy of the letter should be sent to any parent who does not have day to day care and responsibility of the child but does have parental responsibility. Copies of both letters will be placed on the child's school file.

### **Delayed Return Following Authorised Term Time Holiday**

If the child does not return to school on the agreed date following their holiday, the school should investigate the absence considering the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Children Missing Education Policy. It is important to follow this policy to safeguard children, for example from forced marriage.

If a child returns to school later than the agreed date and their parent says their return was unavoidably delayed, this absence must be recorded as 'G' (family holiday not agreed or days in excess of agreement). This also applies where a holiday is taken in school holidays but extends into term time.

### **Penalty Notice Due to Term Time Holidays**

Once the unauthorised holiday has been taken and the child has returned, the school will complete a penalty notice referral form (Appendix 3) and email it to [education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk), together with a copy of the holiday request form, the letter sent by the Headteacher to the parent and a copy of the child's up to date attendance certificate. During an academic year two penalty notices can be issued to any one parent with respect to each child.

If procedures have been followed correctly and the case meets the penalty notice criteria the education welfare service will issue a penalty notice.

### **Parent Pays Penalty Notice**

The case is closed and the period of time that the parent received the penalty notice for will not be used in any further proceedings.

### **Parent Does Not Pay Penalty Notice**

If after 42 days the penalty notice remains unpaid, the education welfare service will prepare the case for court. The school will be required to provide a head teacher's certificate. The education welfare service will keep the school informed regarding proceedings upon request.

### **Penalty Notices**

With the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) the local authority has statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent or carer.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post direct to the home of a parent/carer after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, without warning. This includes pupils caught on truancy sweeps, **excessive or unauthorised family holidays** and persistent late arrival after the close of registration.

If you believe at any stage that your child's absence from school may leave you liable for prosecution or a penalty notice, it is important you act without delay to secure their regular attendance.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if you have any questions about this, or if you need help to achieve improvement, then please contact your school to discuss this.

Further advice and support can also be made available to you through the education welfare service.

## **Contact**

Education Welfare Service  
Room FF20  
County Hall  
Beverley  
East Riding of Yorkshire  
HU17 9BA  
education.welfare@eastriding.gov.uk  
(01482) 392146

**Parents are advised not to book a holiday until submitting a 'Term Time Holiday Request Form' and receiving confirmation from the Headteacher that the request is in line with the 'East Riding of Yorkshire's Behaviour and Attendance Partnership Policy for Term Time Holidays', and the Head Teacher is able to authorise the request.**

## **10. Conclusion**

This policy is designed to be a useful, informative working document. It has been designed to be amended in the light of practice and procedures. It seeks to support the East Riding of Yorkshire Local Authority in our shared aim to ensure the maximum attendance and maximum benefit for pupils from their school life. It also seeks to support families. The school wishes to be a friend to families recognising the central role which a successful family life contributes to the development of the individual and citizen of the future.

**See also 'Holiday Leaflet for Parents'**

Reviewed July 2022

To be reviewed July 2024