

# Beormund School

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

The school wants every pupil to achieve the maximum possible improvements in learning and behaviour. We want the pupils to leave this school to gain the most from secondary education in mainstream schools where possible. Good attendance and punctuality are essential if the school and its pupils are to achieve this aim. All the evidence shows that good attendance is directly related to good learning outcomes. Good attendance is even more important for our pupils whose education has often been interrupted and who have greater needs for consistency. Therefore the school wants every pupil to achieve the maximum possible attendance.

### Aim

For all pupils on roll to attend school in a positive frame of mind every day.

### The School Day

The school day starts at 9.10am. Pupils who arrive by bus are expected to go straight to class on arrival. School ends at 3.10pm. There is a morning break from 11.30 – 11.50am. Lunch time is from 1:10pm – 2:00pm.

### Expectations

The school expects that:

#### Pupils

- will attend school every day
- will arrive on time or be at the appointed pick-up place at the right time
- will arrive in a suitable state both physically and emotionally as far as possible
- will have whatever equipment they need, e.g. home/school diaries, reading folders, swimwear, etc.

#### Parents/Carers

- will ensure that their child attends school every day unless absence is absolutely unavoidable
- will ensure that their child arrives on time at the pick-up point or at school
- will contact the school as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend for a valid reason
- will notify the school if any absence is known in advance
- will fully support the school in its aim to raise the achievement of pupils by full attendance
- will come to the school to discuss matters if difficulties arise
- will arrange for a responsible adult to meet the children off the school bus.

#### The school

- will accurately register pupils
- will make immediate contact with parents if the child is absent without prior notification
- will provide regular reports on school attendance statistics
- will promote positive attendance by taking account of pupil's needs
- will see parents/carers at short notice to discuss difficulties which may be preventing a pupil from attending school
- will take appropriate action where school-based difficulties are affecting attendance e.g. bullying, teasing, etc.
- will try to achieve the same understanding and consistency of approach from all staff.

## Registration

The Administrative Officer will register school pupils each morning checking each class. In his/her absence the Headteacher will take responsibility to see that the register is completed by doing it him/herself or deputising someone else to do it.

- He/she will record authorised and unauthorised absences. Entries will be in red and black to conform to the Southwark practice.
- He/she will complete percentages and ensure that they are recorded properly.
- The headteacher will check the register regularly.
- The Education Welfare Service will inspect the register twice a year and report to the Headteacher.

## Lateness

As most of the children arrive by school bus the issue of lateness rarely arises. The register will close at 10.00am. Children who arrive after that will be deemed to have lost the morning's attendance mark unless parents have notified the school for the late arrival. Children who do not take the school bus will be marked late if they arrive after 9.30am. There is an incentive system in the school to promote punctuality in the morning and after breaks.

## Authorised Absence

Only the school can decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Only the Head or Deputy will generally authorise absences. In certain cases teachers can.

Absences can be authorised for the following reasons:

- **Illness** – if the absences are frequent or of longer duration the school will expect a note from the doctor or other proof.
- **Medical or dental appointments** – the school expects parents/carers to make such appointments outside school hours where possible. However it recognises that this is not always possible. In these case the school should be notified in good time and the pupil should return to school as soon as possible
- **Bereavements** – for close family bereavements parents/carers should try to limit the absences. Absences beyond one day should be negotiated with the school.
- **Exclusions** – when a child is excluded he/she should return on the day agreed.
- **Other circumstances** – the school can use its discretion but the cause of the absence must be unavoidable.

## Non-Attendance

We see all of our children as vulnerable children and children who are at risk. We therefore follow up all non-attendance immediately.

If a child is absent without explanation the parent will be rung by 10.00am. Otherwise contact will be made on the same day by letter. In both cases the parent will be reminded of the importance of full attendance and the need for prior notification.

If the reason is unsatisfactory the parent will be notified of this. If the child has been sent to school but not attended, appropriate action will be agreed with the parent/carer.

If the non-attendance is recurrent, the parent/carer will be invited to the school to discuss the matter and a plan for the future drawn up.

The school will do all in its power to remedy any school based difficulties that may be affecting the child's attendance.

In certain cases the School Pastoral Support Team may visit the family to discuss the difficulty. Where none of these strategies work the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

From September 2015, if a child's attendance is 90% or below, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified.

Staff will consult the School's Child Protection Policy as sometimes non-attendance raises issues of Child Protection. This is especially important when the child is on the Child Protection Register. Guidance given there will be followed by all staff.

If a family requires their child to be absent from school during term time due to a holiday for example, an application for leave during term time must be made to the Headteacher. The form can be obtained from the school office. The Headteacher will then make a decision as to whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised. Please note that holidays during term time will only be authorised under exceptional circumstances.

## **Promoting Good Attendance**

Recognising that parents/carers have a key role in ensuring good attendance, the school will do all in its power to promote good relationships with parents. Parents/carers are welcome in the school at any time.

The school has a policy of contacting parents/carers frequently to notify them of positive achievements by the children.

The school will be very careful not to blame parents/carers in any way but rather to encourage them. In this regard, the tone of letters and phone calls is very important.

The school will give incentives and awards for good attendance and send a congratulatory to parents whose children achieve 90% attendance or better every half term or those who have achieved a marked improvement.

School staff play an important role in promoting good attendance. They will give clear consistent messages to parents/carers about valid reasons for absences and the importance of good attendance and also make sure to comment on good attendance and give it a high profile in their classes.

The school will use any promotional material available to encourage good attendance. In the longer term it is hoped that the school will develop its own leaflets or booklets.

A positive effort will be made to welcome children back after absence and illness. The school has a good record of contacting pupils during absences and will continue to do so. It also has a good record of picking up by minibuses children who have missed the school bus.

The school works well with outside agencies especially Social Services and will continue to do so.