

- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark
- Truancy
- Haircut
- To get new shoes or uniform

### Religious observance

Beccles Primary Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parent/carers will be aware of these dates and should complete a Request for Absence form in advance.

### Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

### Arriving late

All pupils (Reception to Year 6) should arrive at school between 8:30am – 8:50am for a soft start.

Morning register is taken at 8:55am and the register remains open for 10 minutes. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken but before 9.05am will be marked as present but late.

Pupils arriving late should report to the school office on arrival and the adult bringing them to school will be expected to give a reason for the lateness. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed, either in the morning or the afternoon, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for the whole of the session.

### Some strategies to improve punctuality

#### Bedtime routines

- Encourage children to pack their bag before going to bed, ready for the next day.
- Getting to bed earlier.
- Setting a time for a television, iPad, computer, mobile phone and other devices to be turned off.

#### Morning routines

- Setting the alarm for a time that allows all morning routines to be carried out without making them late.
- Having breakfast before leaving home, so there is no need to call in at the shop on the way to school.
- Encourage them to leave home at least five minutes earlier than they think they needs to.
- Meeting a reliable friend to walk to school with.
- Coming to school for breakfast club.

### How can parents/carers help their child have good attendance and punctuality?

As part of our whole-academy approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- Notify the school by telephone on the first day that their pupil is unavailable to attend.
- **Avoid making medical/dental appointments during the school day.**
- Do not take children out of school during term time and in the case of exceptional circumstances permission must be granted by the Headteacher.
- Promote the value of excellent attendance at home and follow the procedures set by the school.
- Advise the school of any difficulties they may be having so that support can be provided as appropriate.
- Are aware that Section 444 of the Education Act states, 'If a pupil of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.'

# Attendance and Punctuality

## The Role of Parents/Carers



***Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.***

Taken from 'Academy Attendance - guidance for maintained academies, academies, independent academies and local authorities' Department for Education, Nov 2016

*Beccles Primary Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. Our target for attendance is **96% or better.***

## Why is good attendance and punctuality important?

Education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to both academic and social development, which in turn will improve the life chances of children and young people.

## What is good attendance?

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-99.9%	Good	5-9	1-2
95-95.9%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-94.9%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4

## So what does 90% attendance actually mean?

**90% attendance** over a school year = ½ day absent every week!

## It's your responsibility

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to optimise their learning, achieve the best they can and get the most out of their school experience. Failure to do so is an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

We ask parents to work with us to ensure good attendance by:

- ensuring your child arrives on time every day;
- promoting a good attitude to learning by ensuring your child attends school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons;
- notifying the school as soon as possible on the first day of an absence (by phone or in person) and then contacting the school on each subsequent day of absence;

- providing reasons for the absence (if insufficient information is given the absence may be unauthorised);
- providing medical information/evidence when requested;
- returning your child to school as soon as possible following an illness;
- making medical/dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible;
- not taking holidays during term time.

If a child is feeling unwell due to a headache, cold or stomach ache they should be encouraged to attend school; the school will contact parents if their condition worsens and they need to go home.

If a child is absent from school for a prolonged period of time, or has a recurrent medical problem, parents should send supporting documentation to the school office; this will be photocopied and returned to the parent.

If a child's attendance is below 96%, absences will only be authorised if supported by medical or other relevant evidence.

## Absence

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school. Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that it should be authorised. **Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that while calling the school or providing a note for an absence complies with safeguarding procedures, it does not automatically mean an absence will be authorised.**

The school may authorise absence in the following circumstances:

1. Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend. Medical verification should be sought wherever possible; this may include a doctor's appointment card, prescription, or photograph of any medication prescribed. If a child's attendance is below 96%, absences will *only* be authorised if supported by medical or other relevant evidence.

2. Where the pupil has a medical appointment. Parents are encouraged to make these outside of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards, or send them beforehand. Verification of appointments must be provided upon return to school.
3. Where the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parent/carer belongs.
4. Where there are exceptional family circumstances that may necessitate term time absence e.g. bereavement, funeral or terminal illness, but there must be a discussion with the Headteacher regarding necessity of length of absence and a Request for Absence form will need to be completed.

**Leave of absence will not be authorised within term time** except in exceptional circumstances. The following reasons may be considered exceptional:

- Parents are in the armed forces returning from overseas placements.
- Wedding of an immediate family member; evidence to be provided and a maximum of one day granted.

If you wish to request term time leave for exceptional circumstances, you will need to complete a Request for Absence form. This should be submitted 4 weeks prior to the absence and include the appropriate evidence. The Headteacher will then make a decision as to whether or not the leave can be authorised and will only do so if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time. Parents/Carers will be notified of the Headteacher's decision by letter.

## Unauthorised absences

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping, birthdays
- Looking after other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Trips in term time that have not been agreed