



Byron College

Pupil Attendance & Absence Policy

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Introduction

Ofsted statement on attendance

“There is a clear link between attendance and achievement. Inspectors should use their evaluation of attendance to assist their analysis of any differences between the achievement of different groups of learners, such as those of different gender or ethnicity. Inspectors should evaluate how much the school knows about the attendance patterns of groups of learners and the effectiveness of systems to alert them to changes in pupils’ attendance, as a sudden or a gradual alteration can indicate a safeguarding issue”

Key Principles

- Achievement and attendance are closely linked
- It is important to maintain a high profile for attendance issues throughout the year
- Attendance figures should be communicated to parents regularly if there are concerns
- Children and parents should be supported to develop a responsibility for attendance and be engaged with the issue
- Attendance certificates will be shared with parents if attendance drops below the school’s target
- The school’s approach to investigating absence will be pro-active

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be away or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence. Parents may not authorise absence; only school can do this. If school staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or emergency dental/optician appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- family bereavement;
- a child caring for a sick or disabled family member (authorisation should, in such instances, be of limited duration);
- involvement in a public performance;

- 'special' occasions (the nature of such special occasions will be determined by schools on an individual basis);
- lateness (when the child arrives after the register has closed and offers a satisfactory explanation – see below under Lateness).

Excessive amounts of authorised absence may often be as damaging to continuity of learning as unauthorised absence; school therefore will only authorise absence sparingly and only after careful consideration, particularly where children have a history of irregular attendance.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by school to be unacceptable.

Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc);
- family holidays (other than in exceptional circumstances);
- lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed and fails to offer a satisfactory explanation;
- 'special' occasions (when the school does not agree that leave should be given).

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore if his/her attendance is 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Lateness

School begins at **8.40am** and we expect all children to be in school at this time. Any child arriving later than **9:00am** should enter school via the main gate and report to the school office.

If accompanied, the parent should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the MIS. The child may then go to their classroom, but they will still be marked as late in the register.

Children who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Family holidays during term time

Parents are strongly advised not to take their children out of school for a holiday during term time. We may choose to authorise up to **10 days absence** in any school year under exceptional circumstances e.g. family needing to support each other following a crisis. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary for longer planned absence – this should always be discussed with the Head Teacher.

If parents decide to take their child out of school for a family holiday and this has not been authorised by the Head Teacher, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Provided there is no further significant absence this should not cause a problem for parents or children. However, should absence due to an unauthorised holiday result in a high absence total for the year it may be necessary for the school to take further action (see 'Procedures').

Procedures

We expect children to attend school unless there is a good reason for absence. If a child is absent, parents should telephone school on each day of absence, before **9:00am** explaining the reason why their child is not at school. If no contact is made with the school then we may telephone on the first day of absence. Attendance is monitored each half term and if a child's absence falls below the school's target a letter will be sent home (even if the absence has been authorised). If attendance does not improve another letter will be sent home. Should a child's attendance continue to be a concern parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher.

Recording and registers

Class registers are to be completed by Form Teachers before **9:00am**.

First day calling

First day phone call is recognised as the single most effective action in improving attendance.

Parents are expected to ring school on the first day of absence, however if no notification is received, the school will contact those who have not called in on the same day. This is best if done for all pupils but certainly for those on a target list of low attendees. School administration staff make the calls and make a record of the information provided by the parent.

Ongoing absences

Fail safe position. Where a child has not attended, without notification or any other satisfactory information as to the absence, then by the third day of absence the school should make a 'Reasonable Inquiry'.

After the third day of absence, the school must ring the parent's number:

if no response then

- ring an emergency contact number;

if no response then

- send a letter to the home address asking parents to contact the school;

if no response then

- contact child services, if necessary, safeguarding following guidance from the School Lawyer on how to proceed.