

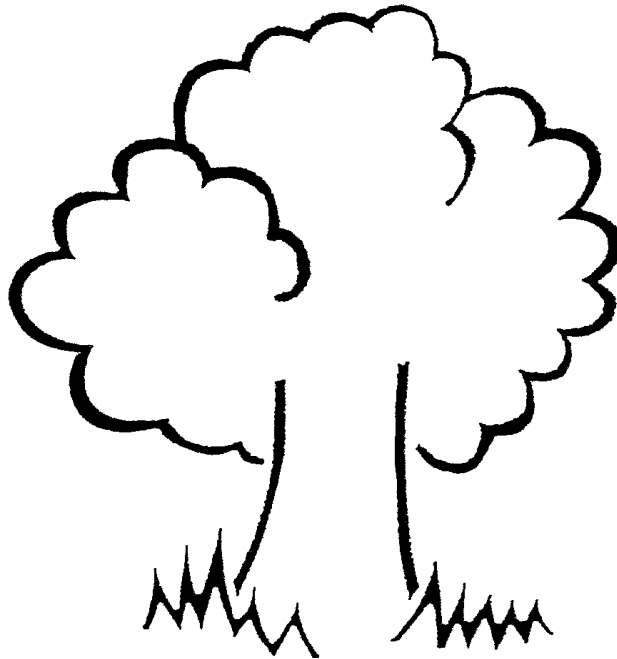
# ATTENDANCE POLICY

# 2017

Reviewed and amended May 2017

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

**Banks Road Infant and Nursery School**



**BANKS ROAD INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**  
**“A Home for Learning, Laughing, Caring and Trying”**

## **WHY?**

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on their child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- “Regular” attendance is defined as 96.8% which is our attendance target for the year. Anything below this is regarded as ‘poor’ attendance. We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different but our school is dedicated to the education of all our pupils and believes that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
  - Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
  - Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.

## **OVERALL AIMS**

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

## **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence telephone call.

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- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the Government on attendance twice a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance
- Discuss cases with the Family Service Enforcement Lead. They offer advice on casework and quality of evidence in the case file
- Make a referral through the Early Help Unit for a pupil whose attendance has not improved and whose parents have not engaged with schools efforts to resolve the issues.
- Make the case file available to the Family Service Enforcement Lead.

### **THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.50 a.m.
- To inform school on the first day of any absence.
- To request leave as far in advance as possible.
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's '**Leave Of Absence Form**', giving the reason for the request.
- To work with the school and the Family Service Enforcement Lead. They offer advice on casework and quality of evidence in the case file.
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should: Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving; Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

### **REGISTRATION**

Every teacher completes a class register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. It is marked in accordance with guidelines of the LA and totalled when complete.

Children arriving after the completion of the register are deemed to be late and this is recorded separately.

- Arrivals after 8.50 a.m. must be signed in by the parents.
- Arrivals between 8.50 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. will be recorded as late before the register closes.
- Arrivals after 9.00 a.m. will be recorded as late after the register closes.
- The number of minutes late will be recorded and monitored and reported to parents.

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**ABSENCE**

- Only the school can authorise absence. Authorisation is only made if the reason is adjudged to be valid and has been reported by an appropriate adult.
- Parents are asked to let the school know the reason for the child's absence by telephone before 9.30 a.m. A written record of telephone calls is kept by the office staff.
- Sometimes the parent of another child will give the class teacher a verbal message. This is noted by the teacher on a record sheet that is kept in the register.
- If a reason for absence has not been received by 9.30 a.m., the school will telephone the parent to ask for a reason and ensure that the child is safe at home.
- When a child is absent for three days without further contact, school will contact the parent again for an update.
- If an absence seems too long for the original reason given, the head teacher may also make further contact.

**ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

- Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.
- A request for absence is considered on its merits at the time and many variables are taken into consideration. For any parent / carer requesting family holiday of 3 days or more over a 6 week period and current (ie academic year to date) attendance falls below 96.8% ('regular' attendance) then this factor will play a greater part in the decision to agree to a request for holiday in term time and whether a penalty notice will be issued (in line with the **Nottinghamshire Code of Conduct.**)

AS OF 1ST SEPTEMBER 2014, THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS

- If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.
- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Head teacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'.
- Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.
- Any fine issued and subsequently paid, goes to Nottinghamshire County Council and not Banks Road School.

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## **MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

Monitoring attendance is the responsibility of the head teacher and the Administrative Assistant (Pupils). Attendance is updated on SIMS each week, to ensure that all absence is correctly coded, and that any unauthorised absences are noted. Trends for cohorts and individuals are regularly checked.

## **WEEKLY CELEBRATION**

Golden Star Assembly is held every week on Friday. Classes with 100% attendance receive an Attendance Trophy Cup and a Full Attendance certificate. The Classes receive extra break time on the following Monday of 10 minutes.

## **THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

Instances of absence and lateness are logged and discussed weekly with the head teacher. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

- Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home.
- Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers.
- Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the EWO.
- Stage 4: If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues. Should concerns persist the EWO will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action.

## **REPORTING ATTENDANCE LEVELS**

All parents are informed of their child's authorised and unauthorised absence on the termly progress report and on the annual report in July.

Attendance statistics are returned annually to the DfE.

## **IMPROVING ATTENDANCE TOOLKIT (SEPTEMBER 2015)**

Our procedures for dealing with attendance concerns follow the Nottinghamshire County Council guidelines through the Improving Attendance Toolkit. This toolkit is aimed at providing maintained schools and academies with information and resources that will support activity around legal interventions to improve attendance.

Maintained schools and academies can also seek advice from local authority officers where this may be required.

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In Nottinghamshire, the Family Service will work alongside schools to provide support to any family where attendance is an issue and to lead of the prosecution of cases where this is required.

This toolkit provides maintained schools and academies with guidance on:

- General Practice/strategies to address attendance issues,
- Absence for medical reasons
- home visiting
- Gathering evidence for legal proceedings
- Recording notes of interviews and
- Issuing Penalty Notices.
- Sample Letters for Penalty Notices

<b><u>THE POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY.</u></b>
DATE OF REVIEW BY GOVERNING BODY: <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;">June 2016 June 2016 March 2017 May 2017 March 2018</div>
This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Governing Board in May 2017.  Signed:    Chair of Governors _____  Date: _____

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**ABSENCE REQUEST FORM (exceptional circumstances only)**

To: *Head Teacher of Banks Road Infant and Nursery School*

*I wish to apply to have an absence authorised for:*

Child's name ..... Class/Year .....

Child's name ..... Class/Year .....

Date from ..... date to .....(inclusive)

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s): .....

Address: .....

Do you have another child who attends at a different school that will also be absent? If so, please state the child's name and school

.....

Please fully explain the **exceptional circumstances** that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s) .....

Office use only		<input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	
		Signed _____ Headteacher

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable.

Pupil(s) name(s).....

Class/Year.....

☐ Absence authorised from .....to ..... (Inclusive)

☐ Absence unauthorised current attendance ..... % as of ...../...../20.....

Signed .....(Head Teacher) Date.....

**NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS**

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission **must** be sought in **advance**. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactorily up to the date covered by this request.

**WARNING TO PARENTS**

If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings (a Summons being issued against you for irregular school attendance) which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

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**AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME**

**IMPORTANT:** Please read carefully the information below.

**WARNING:** If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice\* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

**As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child’s education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.**

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>School aged pupils in Nottinghamshire maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and you may receive a £60* fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>

<p><b>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Genuine illness</li> <li>▪ Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)</li> <li>▪ Days of religious observance</li> <li>▪ Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>▪ External examinations</li> <li>▪ When Traveller children go on the road with their parents</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not</u> be authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Any type of shopping</li> <li>▪ Looking after siblings or unwell parents</li> <li>▪ Birthdays</li> <li>▪ Resting after a late night</li> <li>▪ Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li> </ul>
<p><b>The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.</b></p> <p>We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child’s education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.</p>	

\*Penalty Notice £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21days and before 28 days