



# BALFOUR

## JUNIOR SCHOOL

### **Attendance Policy**

Agreed by the LGB: 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Next review: October 2024

This document operates in accordance with the Beyond Schools Trust Attendance Policy, DfE guidance and the framework and advice contained within the Medway guidance on achieving and maintaining high attendance, which the School and its Governing Body intend to follow.

AASSA	Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies
AAP	Attendance Advisory Practitioners.
SIMS	School Information Management System
DfE	Department for Education.

**N.B The term ‘parent’ should also be taken to mean the person with care responsibilities.**

### Principles

- Regular and full-time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life.
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual in preparation for adult life.
- It is the parent’s responsibility to contact the school on the first day and subsequent days of an absence.
- The school and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality.

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to

- Set out the ways by which attendance and punctuality are managed by the school.
- Clarify the role of the parents/carers.

### The School will:

- give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and know that their presence is valued.
- raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using newsletters and other communications to parents.
- encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child’s education.
- encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using a computer-based registration system, and absences are followed up promptly.
- communicate effectively with other agencies (AASSA, Health, Early Help, Social Services etc.).
- meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.
- ensure that all staff comply with the school procedures and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- ensure information is available for governors and parents.
- ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs.



- share good practice with other schools and agencies.
- have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence.

### **Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality**

- All new parents are introduced to the policy and procedures and information regarding attendance in the School Prospectus. It is also accessible on the school website.
- New parents are given a booklet highlighting the importance of good school attendance in their welcome packs. Copies are available from the school office.
- A representative from AASSA is invited to attend our 'new parent meeting' before pupils join year 3.
- PN1 letter is sent to all parents at the start of the academic year outlining expectations and possible consequences of poor attendance.
- The newsletter is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder.
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for work.
- Maintain up to date records within SIMS.
- Liaise with the AAP during regular monitoring visits to identify attendance concerns, making referrals to AASSA where appropriate.

### **We expect the parent to:**

- provide up-to-date contact numbers and changes of address.
- notify the school when their child is absent by 9.00am on the first day of the absence, giving a reason for the absence.
- notify the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing.
- in cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home, if appropriate. This also enables school to be prepared for the child's return.
- make medical/dental appointments outside of school hours, where possible.
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down, if an urgent appointment has been made etc.
- Provide confirmation of appointments and/or medical evidence, where appropriate, if the appointment is during the school day.
- understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.

### **Registers**

The method of maintaining the class registers is through the SIMS Attendance Module. Class teachers complete an electronic registration sheet twice daily, this is checked by the office.



The following codes are used on SIMS:

M	medical or dental appointments authorised
I	illness authorised
L	late before registers closed authorised
U	late after registers closed unauthorised
C	other authorised circumstances (exceptional)
H	annual family holiday authorised
G	family holiday not agreed unauthorised

N	no reason yet provided for absence unauthorised
V	educational visit or trip authorised
P	approved sporting activity
R	religious activities authorised
B	educated off-site
E	exclusion authorised
O	unauthorised absence not covered by above unauthorised

Pupils should arrive in school for 08.40am. Registers close at 9:05 a.m. Lateness after this time is classed as an unauthorised absence (U) unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

#### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

Absences may be authorised if they are for certain reasons e.g. sickness, absence following the death of a close member of the family or attendance at an interview or examination.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

An absence will be classified as **unauthorised** when:

- a child is kept off school because a parent is ill
- a child is absent because a sibling is ill
- a child is collected early from school because a sibling/parent is ill or has an appointment
- the parent cannot get the child to school
- the child is taken on a shopping trip
- the child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat
- a child is absent due to family work patterns
- the family have overslept or had a late night
- the child needs to be treated for head lice and treatment takes longer than half a day
- the child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
- a child is late after registers close and without a satisfactory explanation
- there is a problem with the child's school uniform
- the family are on holiday
- the weather. i.e. too hot, too cold, too wet etc.
- your child's attendance is below 96% and you cannot provide medical evidence



Each child's authorised and unauthorised absence (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the DfE.

All absences must be reported on every day of absence via the Studybugs app or website. Parents have a responsibility to contact the school if their child is absent for any reason.

If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment you must inform the school office before the appointment, where possible. Proof of the appointment will be required.

The school will telephone the child's parent to enquire about an absence if the parent has not contacted the school by 9.05am on the first day of absence. Parents should keep the school informed if the absence is expected to last more than one day.

If your child suffers a broken bone and is wearing a cast they may attend school, if medical professionals agree. However, for their own safety we will not allow them to participate in P.E.

If a child has been absent without an explanation the absence will be marked unauthorised and the school may inform the AAP about the child's lack of attendance.

Where there is cause for concern, i.e. when attendance is below 96% in any term, the reasons for this will be investigated and where appropriate, discussed with the AAP during one of their regular visits.

#### **Requests for Leave of absence**

**It should be noted that leave during term time may only be granted in certain exceptional circumstances and cannot be for longer than 5 days in any one year. The Headteacher and Governors of Balfour Juniors will only consider requests for absence if the child/children concerned have a minimum of 96% attendance in the last academic year and current academic year. Requests for children who have less than 96% attendance will not be considered and therefore any subsequent absence will be unauthorised.**

Parents are asked to support the school with its aims and should avoid taking their children away from school during term time. All requests for leave must be in writing/email to the Headteacher.

Upon receipt of this letter/email, the Headteacher will make a decision as to whether the leave is authorised or unauthorised. The reasons for taking the absence during school time must be made clear to the Headteacher. Parents are asked to reflect on the possible impact that this time out of school will have on their child's learning when requesting such authorisation.

**Parents have no right to demand that absences are authorised. (Regulation 8 of the Education Regulations 1996 applies).**

Parents of children in Year 6 should avoid taking leave in the first half of the Summer Term when the end of KS2 statutory tests (SAT) take place. **Absences will not be authorised during preparation for and administration of SATs.**



If a pupil goes on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the AAP will be informed.

### Sanctions

Where absences are unauthorised...

- Referral can be made to AASSA, where legal sanctions maybe applied, in the usual manner.
- Where 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) occur, AASSA may issue a **Penalty Notice** on behalf of the local authority.\* This application would be made after consultation with the AAP.

The offence of non-school attendance is absolute, and the legal requirement regarding evidence is simply that the child did not attend.

**From September 2013, the DfE has amended the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, so that any parent/carer who receives a penalty notice for taking their child out of school during term time will have to pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.**

**Failure to pay will result in a summons to court.**

### Punctuality

Gates open	7.30am for breakfast club children
Staff supervise the playground from <b>are out)</b>	8.30am <b>(children should not be left unattended until staff</b>
Doors open	8.40am
Doors close	8.50am
Registration opens	8.50am
Registration closes	9.05am

Pupils should arrive at school between 8.40am and 08.50am. The school day begins at 8.50am with registration. Children arriving after 8.50 am should report to the school office. The registers close at 9.05am Children arriving after this time, without a satisfactory reason for doing so, will be recorded as being absent without authorisation for that session.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they must inform the school office.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be reminded of these times and their obligation to comply with them. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education, but also that of others in the class.

Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness, without an acceptable reason, will be referred to the AAP.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances where the school is made aware of extenuating circumstances, an arrangement allowing a degree of flexibility may be agreed with the Headteacher.



### **Breakfast/After-School Club**

If Parents/carers need to drop their children off early or collect them late the child may attend breakfast or after-school club. This will need to be booked this directly with our external provider, MFSE. There is a charge for this facility.

MFSE run a breakfast and after-school club every day in the gym. Breakfast club is open from 7:30am – 8:40am and after school club runs from 3:30pm – 6.00pm. More information and booking details can be found here <https://mfse.class4kids.co.uk/https://mfse.class4kids.co.uk/>

### **Medical Appointments**

Where possible, appointments should be made outside of school hours. If appointments are attended during school hours letters/cards/texts should be given/shown to the school office.

Pupils must sign out at the school office when attending appointments during the school day. They will be signed back in upon return to school. A log is kept for the purpose. Pupils must be collected by an adult to attend the appointment.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this session will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

We cannot authorise absences for children attending appointments for siblings or parents. We would encourage us of our breakfast or after-school club in these circumstances.

### **Monitoring**

The Headteacher is responsible for authorising absences.

The school attendance lead is Rebecca Denny (Family Liaison Officer).

The Headteacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.

All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and procedures and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

The School has regular meetings with the AAP to discuss concerns and review absence data.

**Next Review Date: September 2024.**

