

**Bentham Community Primary School**  
**Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

**Values:**

*'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfill their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – 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'.*

***School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013***

Bentham Community Primary School expects the highest attendance and punctuality from **all** pupils, at **all** times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.

- North Yorkshire Local Authority's target for attendance is 97%;
- At Bentham we are continuously working towards this goal of 97% attendance for **all** pupils.

**Overall Aims:**

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected;
- To ensure every parent/carer and child understands the importance of regular attendance at school;
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through intrinsic motivation alongside rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality;
- 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/carers, 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.

**Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality:**

**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

**Head Teacher (HT):**

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy;
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with North Yorkshire County Council's Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) policies and procedures;
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with CYPS policies and procedures;
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used, alongside intrinsic motivation;
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence;
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

**The School Administrator**

- To take responsibility for recording attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires;
- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received;
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence;
- To promptly inform the HT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality;
- To record reasons for absence and update class registers;
- To implement the daily checking of registers after the morning registration sessions and take appropriate action;
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils;

**The Family Support Assistant:**

- To oversee the analysis of weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings;
- To meet with the headteacher to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality;
- To monitor weekly attendance data for year groups;
- To promptly inform the HT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality;
- To produce weekly/monthly/yearly data for HT to analyse;
- To liaise with and report to outside agencies such as the Early Help Service / Children's Social Care/ Local Authority;
- To support the HT with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives/initiatives;

**Both the School Administrator and The Family Support Assistant:**

- To develop strong relationships with parents and carers through informal opportunities such as when children arrive with their parents / carers in a morning;
- To develop strong relationships with staff and ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy;
- Inform parents/carers of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school of a child's absence.

**Staff:**

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs so that children are passionate about their own regular attendance;
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children;
- To take a formal register accurately of all children twice a day;
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance at parents' consultation meetings, school reports and all other opportunities that arise;
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs;
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection;
- Work in conjunction with the School Administrator, Family Support Assistant and Headteacher as well as children and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these;
- To promptly inform the Family Support Assistant of pupils who persist with poor attendance;

**Parents:**

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. Wherever possible, doctors' and Dentist appointments should be made out of school hours. If pupils have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils should be brought back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.

**Therefore, parents/carers are expected to:**

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day;
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child(ren) attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons;
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible;
- Telephone to inform the school to on the first day of absence for their child;
- Provide a verbal or written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school if this has not been done earlier;
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact upon learning.

**The Local Authority is expected to:**

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions;
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance;
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance;
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment, child protection and safeguarding.

## **Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:**

### **Aims:**

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school;
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

## **Weekly Praise Assemblies and Attendance Certificates**

Praise Assemblies are held every week. Classes with the highest attendance/punctuality receive a rosette pinned to the Attendance display situated at the Headteacher's Office. At the end of each half term, the class with the highest number of rosettes enjoy a hot chocolate or fruit smoothie treat with the Headteacher. A class who achieves 100% attendance for the week are allowed to nominate a day the following week to come into school in their own clothes.

## **Staff Promoting Good Attendance**

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

## **School Newsletter**

The school newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our school attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives which the school is using to promote attendance and punctuality.

## **School Attendance Board**

We celebrate weekly highest attendance on the Attendance Board outside the Headteacher's office.

## **Breakfast Club**

Daily Breakfast Club places are open to all children and are free to identified, targeted children, for example whose attendance or lateness is a cause for concern. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 8.00 am, ensuring they are on time for school. The club is led by members of school staff.

### **Sharing attendance data**

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the class achieving 100% attendance are shared in weekly assemblies. Individual children's attendance is also celebrated in termly assemblies. This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the class teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

### **Parent/teacher consultation evenings**

#### **Termly Effort Grade Letters**

These provide an opportunity for teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The Family Support Assistant then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to the HT.

### **Lateness**

Five minutes late each day amounts to 25 minutes a week or a staggering 950 minutes an academic year which is nearly 16 hours or approximately 3 school days. Lateness is monitored by class teachers alongside the School Administrator with support offered to parents/carers by the Family Support Assistants and/or Headteacher.

### **Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality**

#### **Class Registers**

Class registers are recorded using Scholarpack. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

#### **Morning Register**

Class registers remain open until 9:30am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register.

From 9.00 am the school doors and gates are closed. Children who arrive at school after this time need to register at the School Office. This is to ensure that no children are missed on the register due to arriving in school late.

The School Administrator officer then checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked '/' (present) in the registers and corrects any mistakes or inputs codes for children who are known to be absent. The school Administrator then begins first day absence calls.

#### **Afternoon Register**

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. They should be completed by 1:10pm at the latest.

### **School Attendance Letters**

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality. These follow the templates provided by North Yorkshire County Council.

## **Punctuality**

The Family Support Assistant and the Headteacher monitor the punctuality of children regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly, or via a phone call. Support can be offered by the Family Support Assistant. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent, explaining how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents are invited into school, to discuss the concerns and plan a way forward. If lateness does not improve following the meeting, then further action will be taken in line with the Local Authority procedures.

## **IMPORTANT:**

**Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.**

## **Monitoring First Day Absence**

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The School Administrator (attendance) follows this system:

- Phone parents' contact number(s);
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response;
- Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly;
- A home visit made by two members of school staff, if appropriate
- Staff to speak to the parents at home time, if they are at school to pick up other children;
- Speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.
- If no contact is made, advice from Children's Social Care will be sought. This may happen sooner, if appropriate.

The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded on Scholarpack.

The School Administrator must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code.

## **Attendance Meetings**

The HT / School Administrator monitor individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEND and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence/punctuality, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 90% and parents who are concerned about their child's attendance, are invited to work in partnership with the school.

- Pupils with 85% or less attendance – involvement of Early Help Service

The Early Help Service is contacted to work with the families of children at these levels of absence and families of the children near to this number of absences to avoid them becoming consistent PAs.

### Summary of procedures to promote good attendance/punctuality:

The following tables show specific procedures to maintain and encourage excellent attendance at Bentham school:

Daily procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Parents ensure pupils arrive at school on time	Parents / Carers	
Parents inform the school by 9.00 am, if their child is absent that day	Parents / Carers	Office staff update registration codes
Pupils arriving late to school are registered at reception	School Office	Absence mark on Scholarpack amended to a late mark
Teachers record attendance This is done at 9.00 am and 1.00 pm.	Teachers / Supply staff	Staff use scholarpack register
1st day absence phone calls are made to inform parents of their child's unexplained absence for that day parents contacted, if required	School Administrator	Attendance codes updated

Weekly procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced by year group and school	Family Support Assistant	Entered into Attendance File to allow for monitoring and analysis
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced and shared in Celebration Assembly, displayed on the School Attendance Boards and uploaded to Website	Family Support Assistant/Headteacher	Parents are able to see which class(es) have been successful with their attendance and punctuality.
Absence codes for individual pupils are updated using Scholarpack to show reason for absence	School Administrator	Information provided here is used to provide targeted interventions as appropriate

Half termly and termly procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Analyse attendance/punctuality data to monitor trends and progress	Family Support Assistant	Identify specific ways to improve attendance of target groups
Assemblies to promote attendance/punctuality and share term's data and progress	All Staff	Children develop shared ownership and understand the importance of regular attendance
Discussions as required in response to specific attendance/punctuality concerns of a particular cohort of pupils	Headteacher/Family Support Assistant	Identify best ways to support family / pupil
Pupil's attendance % from Scholarpack is sent home termly with Effort Grade Letters	Office staff produce Attendance % from Scholarpack for Class Teachers to include on Effort Grade Letters termly	Parents are able to keep track of their children's attendance.
Statistics produced for staff  Individual attendance/punctuality discussed with pupils and families, at parents' evenings	School Office  Class teachers	Mentoring and advice on attendance/punctuality issues provided to all families
Analyse attendance/punctuality data and information to identify cases of concern and develop appropriate interventions	Headteacher/Family Support Assistant	Targeted intervention for individual concerns
Meeting to discuss individual cases, monitor progress and refer new concerns. Support and meeting provided for pupils and families.	Headteacher/Family Support Assistant	Identify best ways to support family / pupil and identify ways to improve attendance
Review success and impact of attendance/punctuality strategies for the term	Headteacher/Family Support Assistant	Amend and refine interventions as appropriate
Referral to the Early Help Service if required	DSL/DDSL	Liaise with parents/carers/Early Help



## **Extended Holidays**

In line with North Yorkshire Authority, 'Leave in term Time Guidance' and the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, **leave for pupils during term time is only authorised under very exceptional circumstances.** The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Head teachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil;
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil;
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required).
- Service personnel returning from active deployment.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your children, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the school office. The Headteacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

## **Penalty Notices**

**If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.**

### **Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:**

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120;
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

### **Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:**

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.

**These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.**