



Beckley and Peasmarsh Federation



Attendance Policy

The Federation Curriculum is firmly rooted in its Christian foundation: enabling every child to grow spiritually and emotionally; fostering imagination and a deep sense of personal identity and self-worth; providing guidance through the loving example of Jesus Christ.

Beckley Mission Statement

Our hope is that each child at Beckley will develop an appetite for learning that will endure throughout their lives. To achieve this, the curriculum will need to motivate and excite children so that they engage fully in learning, cultivate positive attitudes and relationships, make good progress, fulfil their true potential and

"Achieve, Believe, Care."

Peasmarsh Vision:

At Peasmarsh School, our Christian beliefs and faith underpin the way we treat all children and the right for all children to have the opportunity to learn, behave well and have high aspirations.. Our school Mission Statement to :

"Love Learning and Love your Neighbour as Yourself"

Policy revised: November 2018

Policy adopted by the federation governors on: 15 November 2018

This policy reflects the vision and aims of the federation by

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.
- ❖ Making children feel valued and special acknowledging that they are missed if they are absent and welcoming them when they return.

Summary

The Federation Schools have a legal duty to publish their absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend. Attendance figures are given in the pupils' annual reports and overall attendance is commented upon. Mid-year parent consultations will involve discussions about attendance if this has impacted on the child's progress. Regular Pupil progress review meetings held with the classteacher and senior leadership will consider the child's attendance and the head of school may ask to meet with parents to discuss the school's concerns. The school communities are both committed to working with parents to ensure the best outcome for every child.

Principles

The Federation Governing Body together with the Headteachers have a duty to limit absence and promote attendance in line with guidance from the DFE. There are clear links between attendance, attainment and pupil well-being. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school every day.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Role of the Local Authority

The Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) is responsible for the enforcement of attendance of all registered pupils. It has an obligation to do this through legal action if necessary. The Local Authority monitor attendance through regular inspection of registration data.

Every missed half-day session has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ parents keeping children off school (except in extenuating circumstances)
- ❖ holidays taken during term time
- ❖ truancy before or during the school day
- ❖ absences which have never been properly explained
- ❖ children who arrive at school too late to get a mark eg: registers have closed.

Parents are expected to contact their school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the schools may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service from the Local Education Authority. ESBAS will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use legal interventions on parents or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Federation School Procedures

Beckley and Peasmarsh Federation Schools apply the following in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

All absences will be monitored with the school contacting parents on the first day of absence.

Sickness

- Parents should phone the office on the first day of absence and each subsequent day.
- Follow up the absence in writing.
- In cases of persistent absence the school may ask for medical evidence before authorising further periods of absence.

Punctuality

At Beckley, the bell is rung at 8:55am ready for the school day to officially begin with children in class and being registered. Any children arriving after the site has been secured will be directed via the school office. A late mark will be recorded in this instance. Any arrivals after registers close at 9.05am will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

At Peasmarsh, the bell is rung at 8:55am ready for the school day to officially begin at 0900, when children are registered should be in class. Any children arriving after the site has been secured will be directed via the school office. The registration window will remain open until 9:20am. A late mark will be recorded, in this instance, as Unauthorised Absence.

Attendance data is monitored by the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service. Persistent late arrival will trigger a letter of concern and the intervention of the Local Authority's attendance service (ESBAS). Once 10 sessions of unauthorised lateness have accrued a Penalty Notice may be issued. This means a fine of £60 per child, per parent, which will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

Medical Appointments: Absence due to medical appointments must be notified to the school office prior to the medical appointment with a copy of evidence of the appointment. Parents are asked to make medical appointments out of school hours is possible.

Other term time absence

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt children's learning.

Requests for absences other than above should be made by filling in the 'Withdrawal from Learning' form, downloadable from the East Sussex County Council web site, or available from the school offices. This form must be submitted to the child's school two weeks before the date of the planned absence

Holidays during term time will not be authorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances. In these circumstances head teachers may agree up to 10 days maximum of absence

This is applicable to all children, including those in their reception year who are at school full-time.

Any unauthorised term time holidays that parents go ahead with, will automatically trigger a penalty notice from the local authority and a fine will be issued for absence in excess of four days. Parents who go ahead with the absence when it has been unauthorised may incur a fine of £60 per child, per parent. If the fine is not paid within the first 21 days it increases to £120 per child, per parent. If the fine remains unpaid, legal and court action can follow.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on an individual basis with the Head of School making the final decision. The following examples are NOT counted as exceptional circumstances and will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

A leave of absence request can only be made by the residing parent with legal responsibility for a child.

Dealing with Persistent Absence

The Persistent Absence threshold is 10%. Any child missing 10 % (present for 90% or less) of their possible school sessions is a Persistent Absentee.

Every month, the school office will provide the headteacher with a summary of pupil attendance. Letters will be issued where there is a likelihood of the attendance rate falling below the LA target of 95%.

Should the absence fall further or continue with no sign of improvement, parents will be contacted and may be required to come to an Attendance Panel Hearing.

Beckley and Peasmarsch Federation schools both have a variety of measures which encourage good attendance, including attendance awards. These include:

- Stickers, certificates
- Class attendance levels publicised on newsletters.
- Attendance publicised on the school website.
- Postcards home to congratulate children on good attendance
- Positive verbal reinforcement for good attendance
- Visibly promoting good attendance throughout the school

Parents will be informed by letter if their child's attendance is a cause for concern, as well as meeting with the headteacher. Letters will be colour coded in order to highlight the seriousness of the absence.

Amber = less than 93%

Red = less than 90%

Children Missing in Education (CME)

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School will follow the local authority procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the **absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days** Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The Local Authority provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

The attendance lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly

Why attendance matters:

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves **80%** attendance this means that they have missed approximately **40 days** of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in the Federation schools are:

Lison Smart – Headteacher Peasmarsh

Simon Thurston – Headteacher Beckley
