



**BEACONSFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**November 2012**



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Beaconsfield Primary is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We want to see that children get the best chances in Life. Good school attendance is one of the main factors in determining your child's future and opportunities in life. The facts are that children who miss school regularly do less well in terms of achieving their academic potential and having career choices. All children need to attend for more than 95% of the school year.

## 2. WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

It is important that your child develops good attendance habits right from the start. Some parents believe that primary school is not so important and that it is OK to have time off. **This is not true.**

We know that children who have below average attendance at primary school:

- Do less well in SATS tests, often failing to achieve Level 4 in Year 6.
- Can have difficulty in making and keeping reliable friends.
- May have difficulties with school work
- Can develop behaviour problems in and out of school
- Run a greater risk of truanting or dropping out of school as they get older
- Have more restricted opportunities for further education and employment in the future.
- Find it more difficult in finding and keeping a job as an adult.
- Are more likely to be involved with the Police and be caught up in criminal behaviour.

## 3. The LAW

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 imposes a duty on parents to ensure that their children are properly educated. When your child is registered at a school, a parent must ensure the regular and full time attendance of their child at school. Not to do so is a criminal offence. It denies your child the right to a consistent and uninterrupted education.

## 4. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either Authorised or Unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, specialist medical/dental appointments (not GP visits) which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to Ealing Education Social Worker (ESW) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily



- 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
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your 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 usually makes things worse.

## 5. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

**It is your responsibility to:**

- Avoid unnecessary absences such as treats for birthdays etc.
- Arrange medical/ dental appointments for after school or during the 13 weeks of school holidays. If that is not possible do not keep your child off school for the whole day.
- Shop for clothes/shoes at the weekend, not during school time.
- If you think something is wrong, e.g. your child complains of feeling ill frequently, or bullying, contact the school and make an appointment to discuss your concerns.

**How you can help:**

- Set up good evening and morning routines so that your child arrives alert and ready to learn.
- Make sure your child arrives on time; late arrivals are disruptive to all. (Persistent lateness will be dealt with by the ESW).
- Take an active interest in you child's school and homework.
- Attend parent evenings.

## 6. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

**If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact the school, before 11:00 am on the first day of absence, on telephone number **020 8574 3506**. If the phone is engaged, please leave a message, stating clearly your child's full name (first name and surname), your child's class and the reason for his/her absence.
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – **you must do this even if you have already telephoned us.**
- Even if you have informed your child's teacher about the absence, you still need to inform the school office. (It is your duty to inform office staff, NOT the teachers).
- If you need to take your child out during the day, you must sign out your child and upon return, sign in your child.



### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer or Deputy Head Teacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Ealing Education Social Worker (ESW) if attendance moves below acceptable levels.

## **7. LATENESS**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

- The school day starts at **8.50 am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Children are late if they are not in the class line at 8:50 am.
- To prevent lateness all pupils should be on the playground by 8:45 am.
- Registers are marked by **immediately** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in the class.
- If your child is late, they need to report to the school office **before** going to the classroom

## **8. HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

***Family holidays should be taken during school holidays.***

Families may be tempted by cheaper offers of holidays in term time, or they may wish to spend time away in the country where they have family ties or cultural roots. There is **no legal entitlement** to time off for holidays during the school year.

All applications for leave must be made in advance. The school has a policy that requests for absence during term time will not be approved. This is due to the disruption caused to the class and the individual child who misses school. Children are expected to be in school for the 190 days of the school year with holidays taken outside of these times in the remaining 175 days.

Pupils may be removed from the school roll for periods of unauthorised absence over 20 days. They would then have to re-join the school waiting list upon their return from the period of leave. Pupils who take unapproved leave may be issued with a fixed penalty notice fine by the Education Social Worker (ESW). The current fixed penalty fine is £120. This fine may be levied per child.



Every primary school has an ESW who visits the school regularly. The ESW will inspect the registers and write to, phone or visit parents where concerns about attendance have not been resolved between the school and parents.

The ESW can help you and your child where there are difficulties. However where attendance remains low, parents or carers could face legal action being taken against them. Conviction carries a maximum £2,500 fine or imprisonment.

## **9. CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. If you are changing your telephone number, please inform the school office.