

Banks Lane Infant and Nursery School

Attendance Policy 2021

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Introduction

At Banks lane Infant & Nursery School we believe that all children and young people have a right to an education as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in UK Law. The opportunities provided by education are fundamental to enabling all children and young people to reach their potential and lead happy and rewarding lives.

Evidence shows that there are clear links between good attendance and high achievement in school. Regular school attendance is essential to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

The definition of regular attendance in law is that children and young people attend school each and every day that they are expected to attend.

At Banks lane Infant & Nursery School we will work with parents, carers and children to ensure that children engage in education and maximise their full potential. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their potential.

At Banks lane Infant & Nursery School we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances when children and young people may be unable to attend school. Absence may be agreed in line with national code guidance. Absence from school will be looked into taking into account the specific needs and circumstances of the children and young people concerned.

What does the law say about school attendance?

Parents Legal Duties

Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. Children are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June in the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996), the definition of parent includes natural parents or other people with legal parental responsibility (whether or not they live with the child), and anyone who has care of the child.

For children receiving full time education at a school, parents must ensure that attendance is regular and punctual.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school at which they have been registered the parents may be guilty of an offence, and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority.

Schools Legal Duties

Banks lane Infant & Nursery School is required to:

- Carry out all their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils at the school.
- Promote good attendance and identify patterns of poor attendance at an early stage
- Maintain and preserve accurate registers as required by regulations (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) and (for maintained schools only) make them available for inspection by the Local Authority. This includes:
 - Monitor pupils educated Off-Site and ensuring that the school register mirrors the attendance information held by the off-site provision.
 - Have clear procedures for the closure of registers during each session.
 - Comply with legal requirements regarding adding or removing pupils' names to or from the school roll including ensuring that: Pupils' names are added to the school roll on the expected date of attendance. Pupils' names are removed from roll only when one of the legal grounds in the Education (Pupil Registration) England Regulations 2006 is satisfied. All removals from roll are reported to the Local Authority.
- Information is shared and enquiries made jointly with the Local Authority in order to locate missing pupils.
- Report pupils who fail to attend regularly to the Local Authority. This includes both authorised and unauthorised absences. In the case of pupils on part-time timetables, the Local Authority also requires a part-time timetable Notification Form to be completed.
- Report Missing Pupils (pupils who are continuously absent for 10 days or more without reasonable explanation) to the Local Authority.

Absence from School

All absences must be recorded in the school register, and categorised as either authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence from school

Only the Head teacher can authorise absence from school. Authorised absence is an absence agreed by the school.

Examples of authorised absence can be seen below:

Illness

Parents are asked to contact school on every day that their child is unable to attend school, except where information from a health professional has been provided indicating an expected return date.

Where a child or young person has frequent absence due to illness, parent/carers will be asked to attend a meeting in school to put together a medical action plan.

Where pupils are likely to miss more than 15 days of school, they may be entitled to educational provision from the Education of Sick Children Service, and it is the school's responsibility to ensure that a referral is made in appropriate cases.

Banks lane Infant & Nursery School will work in partnership with parents and health professionals to identify and refer pupils entitled to such provision in line with the Education for Sick Children Policy.

Medical/Dental appointments

Parents are requested wherever possible to make routine medical or dental appointments outside of the school day. However, we understand that hospital appointments and specialist clinic appointments often occur in the school day. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Other examples of authorised circumstances include:

Part-time timetables may be agreed in exceptional cases, for example where medical issues prevent a pupil from attending full time or as part of a re-integration package. This should only ever be used as a temporary arrangement and must be regularly reviewed.

Where a pupil is absent from school due to exclusion.

Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.

When traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending another school. In order to fulfil legal requirements, in such cases, pupils must attend school for at least 200 sessions in every 12 months.

Leave of absence

Leave of absence may only be granted in exceptional circumstances

Parents must complete an electronic 'Leave of Absence Request form' available on the school website in advance to the Head teacher. If the absence is not authorised by the head teacher and parents remove their child from school the school may request that the Local Authority issues an Education Penalty Notice (EPN).

Late Arrival at School

The school days starts at 09:00am. The morning registers are marked by 09:05am. A pupil arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L code). The register will close at 09:30am; pupils arriving after the close of register will be marked as late with the U code, this counts as an unauthorised absence for the session. This will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

Unauthorised Absences from School

Unauthorised absences are absences from school for which the school has not given permission, including arriving late at school after the registers have closed. Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted by the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Banks lane Infant & Nursery School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

As such, the Governing Body will:

- Support and hold to account the leadership team regarding its obligations in relation to attendance.
- Ensure that the legal duties in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to all school staff, pupils, and their parents.
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters who will, as part of this role, review attendance reports at least termly.
- Monitor the school's attendance through half termly reporting at the safeguarding governing body meetings.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and ensure that that manager is allocated sufficient time and resources.

- Contribute and participate in initiatives to promote good attendance across the school.

The Leadership, Office & Pastoral Team will:

- Ensure that the legal duties in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation are complied with.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required.
- Respond to requests for information and recommendations from the Local Authority in relation to specific compliance issues.
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to all pupils and their parents and the wider staff team.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach that reinforces good school attendance for all pupils.
- Ensure good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through half termly reporting to the Safeguarding Governing Body.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed fortnightly (weekly for those pupils with attendance & punctuality concerns) to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Escalation Interventions (See Appendix One).
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Ensure all interventions around attendance are accurately recorded and documented.
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach that reinforces good school attendance.
- Contribute to the provision of good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Work with other agencies such as Stockport Family, EW, SA+, School Nursing, Health Visitors (to name but a few) to implement strategies to improve attendance and to support pupils and their families.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Accurately record and document interventions around attendance.

Parents will:

- Ensure their child attends regularly as required by law.
- Ensure school has up to date contact information including: Parents' and pupils' addresses, parents' telephone numbers and email addresses, telephone numbers for emergency contacts, details of new addresses and schools in the event of a move away from the area
- Comply with the school's absence procedures by:
- Telephoning school on every day that their child is unable to attend school due to illness (except where a doctor's report has already been provided indicating an expected return date).
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances and in advance by completing a 'Leave of Absence Request Form' available on the school website.
- Providing medical or other evidence in relation to absence if required by the school.
- Arranging medical or dental appointments to take place outside school hours wherever possible.
- Not taking family holidays in term time.
- Not taking leave of absence for any reason without prior agreement.
- Raise any issues or concerns which may impact on attendance with school staff at the earliest opportunity.
- Attend meetings with school staff to discuss concerns if requested by the school.
- Work in partnership with school and other agencies to address any attendance problems.
- Encourage good routines at home to ensure children have good sleep patterns and are prepared for school each day.
- Take an active interest, participate in their child's educational progress, and instil the value of education and good attendance.

Managing attendance in school

Banks lane Infant & Nursery School recognises that poor attendance is often a sign of wider difficulties in a child's life whether at home or at school. Parents are encouraged to make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance or behaviour at school, such as bereavement, divorce/separation, or incidents of domestic abuse, or special educational needs or disabilities. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Banks lane Infant & Nursery School recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance – for example, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant refugee pupils and looked after children.

Banks lane Infant & Nursery School will implement a range of strategies to identify cases requiring support including:

- Regular attendance monitoring meetings between the relevant teaching, pastoral staff & SENCO at half termly or more frequently if necessary intervals.
- Regular analysis of attendance data by the pastoral manager including vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND.

Banks lane Infant & Nursery School will implement a range of strategies to provide support to pupils and families including:

- First day absence contact with parents by telephone/text – the pastoral manager will attempt to make immediate contact with parents whenever a child is absent without explanation. In the event school is unsuccessful in speaking with parent/carer(s) voicemail messages will be left requesting contact is made to school regarding the reason for the absence. If there is no option to leave a mobile voicemail a T2P (text to parent) will be sent via the school Admin Manager. If no contact is made to school re; the ongoing absence by day 2 then the parent/carer(s) will be contacted again with phone calls/T2P. Within our duty of safeguarding each pupil's whereabouts, if we still have no contact from the parent/carer(s) then contact is made with the 3rd/4th contact on the SIMS database as an attempt to determine the reason for the child's absence from school. If there are safeguarding concerns/the child and family is perceived as vulnerable (LAC/CP/TAC/TAF) and contact cannot be made with contacts 1 & 2 on day 1 then contact will be made to the 3rd & 4th contacts at that time.
- Attendance & punctuality letters – Banks lane Infant & Nursery School will notify parents in writing if there are attendance concerns and offer support.
- Meetings in school – school will invite parents to meetings in school at an early stage to discuss attendance concerns.
- Meetings between the Pastoral Manager and Education Welfare Office, Sue Banks take place each half term to discuss & review those pupils with attendance of 90% or less. Vulnerable pupils such as Looked After Children (LAC), those in Child Protection or safeguarding processes will also be monitored & discussed at this time.
- Team Around the School – After appropriate action by school and where internal interventions have not been successful, pupils and families requiring further support around attendance will be referred to the Team Around the School (TAS). The TAS includes representatives from services working with children and families in Stockport so that appropriate support can be allocated.
- Early Help Assessments – school will use Early Help Assessments to support families in identifying barriers to good attendance and attainment and put in place plans to overcome them. Completion of an EHA may result in a TAF (Team Around the Family) meeting inviting other appropriate services to meet with school & parents/carers to explore what support can be offered/implemented.
- Referrals to the Education Welfare team – the school will refer cases to the Education Welfare team who offer a range of measures to improve attendance including, Parent Contracts, Medical Action Plan and Education Penalty Notices (see below).
- For Looked after pupils the LAC designated teacher will ensure that attendance issues are addressed in Pupil Education Planning Meetings (PEPs)

- For Pupils with SEND the SENCO will ensure that attendance issues are addressed in all assessment and review processes
- Reintegration Support Packages – where a pupil has missed a significant amount of school a reintegration package can be arranged in consultation with parents and pupils and other relevant services to ensure a smooth return to school.
- Part-time timetables – in exceptional circumstances where a pupil is unable to manage full time attendance a temporary part-time timetable may be put in place.
- Alternative provision – in exceptional circumstances where it is felt that a pupil's needs may be better served outside of the mainstream curriculum; referrals may be made to alternative education providers.

Legal Sanctions

Regular school attendance is a legal duty on parents and carers. If a parent fails to ensure their child attends school regularly, they are guilty of an offence under section 444(1) or (1A) Education Act 1996.

A parent who commits this offence may be liable to prosecution in the Magistrates' Court and, depending on which offence they are convicted of, may be liable to a fine of up to £2500 or a term of imprisonment of up to three months.

Although school will offer support in addressing attendance issues, it will also refer pupils whose attendance fails to improve, or who take leave of absence from school without agreement, to the Education Welfare team within Stockport Council. This can take several routes:

- Education Penalty Notices – Education Penalty Notices are fixed penalty notices issued by Stockport Council of £60 per parent per child. These are payable within 21 days and rise to £120 if paid between 22-28 days. If unpaid after 28 days, the parent will be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance. Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Stockport Council's Code of Conduct.
- Education Penalty Notices for Irregular Attendance - Before being issued with an Education Penalty Notice, parents will receive a written warning. This gives them an opportunity to avoid a fine by ensuring that no unauthorised absences – including late after the close registration marks – are recorded against their child during the next 15 school days. The minimum criteria for sending such a warning is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a three month period.
- Education Penalty Notices for unauthorised leave of absence - Education Penalty Notices may also be issued where a pupil is taken out of school for five days or more without the school's consent – such as for a term time holiday. In these cases, the fine is sent by the Council without an initial warning being issued.
- Parent Contract referrals – a Parent Contract is an agreement which usually involves the school, parents, members of the Local Authority Education Welfare team and, in some cases, the pupil. The agreement sets out the actions required by all parties to

overcome the barriers to improved attendance. Compliance with the contract and the progress of improving attendance are reviewed regularly at Parent Contract Review Meetings. Should a parent fail to participate and/or fail to ensure that attendance improves, prosecution in the Magistrates' Court is likely to ensue.

Appendix 1

Stepped Process for supporting those with frequent absence – Identified using Broken Weeks report

'NOTICING' PERIOD -Prior to letters being sent out	
Action	Supportive phone calls home from Year group manager/pastoral lead/attendance lead (is everything ok? We've noticed X has been absent x many times in x many weeks, anything we can help with?). ALSO , on days they are attending, supportive conversations at the door with parent (as above) or with pupil directly if secondary school age. Regular acknowledgement where attendance is improving (even slight improvement!)
SUPPORTIVE ACTIONS (Informal)	
Being curious – (being mindful of the age of the pupil involved)	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking to the parent or student to establish the reasons behind the lateness/absence. In the conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the difficulty of getting to school on time or whatever it is that is causing the absence/lateness • Offer support (not rescue) to help the attendance/punctuality improve (helping students to set an alarm on their phone, practical advice around consulting the 'TOO ILL FOR SCHOOL' website, etc.) • Gentle reminder that school attendance is compulsory and that it is the parent's responsibility to ensure excellent attendance. • Reminder of what the pupil is missing out on when they fail to attend • Acknowledging progress when there is an improvement in attendance
DIRECT ACTIONS Accompanying Step 1 letter	
Being active in supporting the pupil in their attendance – record these conversations using the school's recording system (CPOMs/SIMS/paper records etc.)	
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check if pupil has a SEND Support Plan/EHCP/Behaviour Support Plan/Personal Education Plan etc. Is this meeting the identified need? • Talk to class teacher/form tutor about any possible in-school difficulties (relationships, academic pressures, changes in behaviour etc.) to identify any identifiable circumstances that could be impacting on student's mental health. • Talk to the parent/pupil (if age appropriate) about anything that may be causing concern at home. • If the absence is caused by repeated medical appointments, support the family with contacting the hospital/dentist/doctors to arrange out-of-school hours appointments. • Providing opportunity to catch up work -make it an expectation • Reintegration policy /practice in place
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those displaying anxiety around attending school - Email or text student or pupil at the start of the day (using pre-approved and Safeguarding checked message) – EG. We're looking forward to seeing you/X at school today – named person will be in the playground/at the door/agreed place if you want to go straight to them for help starting the school day. • Refer to the Anxiety Based School Avoidance guidance literature.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider referral to TAS or complete EHA to broker additional agency support
If the above has not brought about an improvement in attendance move to the actions below	
HOLDING-TO-ACCOUNT ACTIONS	
Broken Week Absence (other reasons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance action plan meeting (follow protocol) Step 2 letter and process, and if needed, step 3 letter and process. If in the case of repeated low level illnesses, use Medical absence Protocol in place of absence protocol.
Unauthorised Holiday Absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider Education Penalty Notice
Parents Withdrawing Pupils From School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange to meet with parent to resolve the presenting issue Where this is not possible, write to the parent to remind them of their statutory duty to send their child to school and ask them to comment on what actions they would like taken to resolve the issue – advise of formal complaints process where necessary Where the parental request is unreasonable or unobtainable (ie I want an EHCP for my child tomorrow!) Contact SAP worker – can they support the family in returning the pupil to school? From day 10 onwards, complete a Missing from School Form (run internet search ‘Stockport Missing From School Form’ to ensure that the most recent version of the form is filled in. Inform the parents that school have notified the Education Welfare Team of their child’s absence and the reasons behind this.
Part-time timetables	
These should only be used in exceptional circumstances and in tandem with seeking local authority support through TAS meetings.	