



# Attendance Policy

DATE: Summer 2025

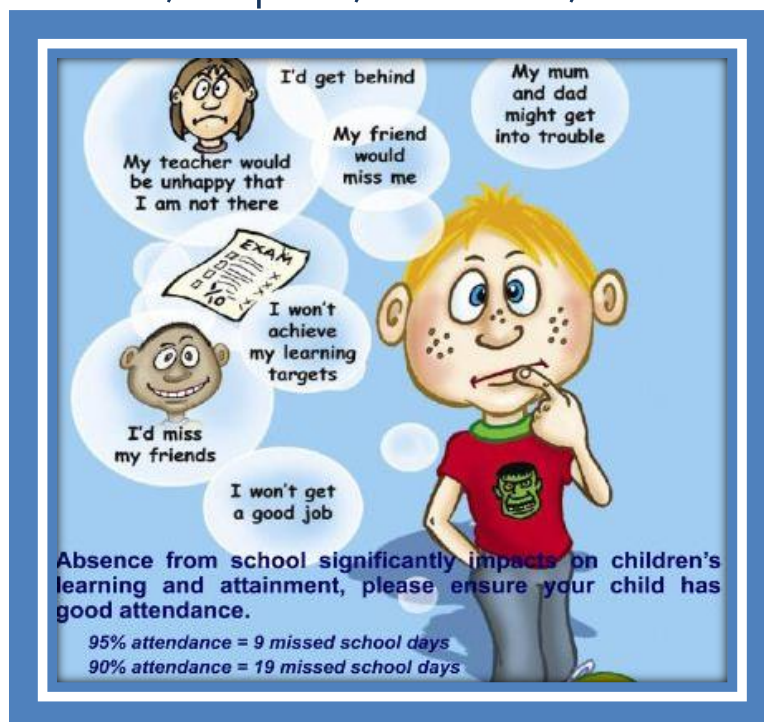
Brierley Primary School



**Little Bears @ Brierley**

# Attendance Policy

## Nurture, Aspire, Believe, Achieve



Attendance Officer	Miss V. Baker	<a href="mailto:admin@brierley.cheshire.sch.uk">admin@brierley.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Senior Attendance Champion	Mrs H.Cunningham	<a href="mailto:hcunningham@brierley.cheshire.sch.uk">hcunningham@brierley.cheshire.sch.uk</a>

At Brierley Primary School, it is our culture to support our families in all the ways we can. Working as a team, we aim to provide each child every opportunity to achieve their full potential. To do this, it is essential that all pupils attend school regularly, and on time. To achieve our aims, it is therefore our duty to ensure that all parents and guardians understand the importance of regular attendance, the sort of absences we will and will not authorise and the procedures if your child needs to be absent from school. This policy incorporates the statutory guidance as stated by the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance.' (2024)

It is proven that poor attendance is often linked to poor performance in the classroom. This can result in your child struggling with their relationships with their peers, developing low self-confidence and experiencing a disrupted pattern to their education; all of which can be damaging in the long run.

### Parental Responsibility

The responsibility for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school office whenever the child is absent before 9am.

### The Role of the Teacher

Each class teacher completes a register at the beginning of each morning session. They should identify unauthorised absences and bring them to the attention of Miss Baker (attendance officer) as soon as possible.

Frequent absence is also a cause for concern. Persistent absence will be investigated by school and the Attendance and Children out of School Service.

**It is the school who authorises absence, not the parent/carer.**

At Brierley Primary School pupils are expected to arrive by 8.45 am. The school gates open from 8.30am and teachers greet the children in the morning as they come into school. The gates are locked at 8.45am and children arriving after this time, go to Reception.

Any pupils arriving after 9.15am will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence and this may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice (£160 per child/ per parent)

### **Authorised/Non Authorised Absence**

Absence is either authorised, such as in the case of illness or of religious observance, or unauthorised, when there is no reason given for such absence or when it is considered that the explanation is unjustified or unreasonable.

- The legal responsibility for ensuring pupils attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents/carers.
- It is essential that parents/carers should be the first line of contact whenever the pupil is absent from school.
- It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to contact the school whenever a pupil is absent.

### **Authorised Absences**

An authorised absence (one which the school agrees is a reasonable one) will only be granted for:

1. Child illness.
2. Medical appointments.
3. External Examinations (e.g. Music or dancing exams, entrance exams).
4. Educational assessments conducted by approved agencies.
5. Religious observances (e.g. Funerals, major feast days in religions other than Christianity).
6. Education activity at an alternative site (e.g. Participation in a county sports event).
7. Visits to prospective new schools.
8. Very special family circumstances.

### **Unauthorised Absences**

An unauthorised absence – absences which the school would not consider reasonable, include:

1. A trip to the theatre.
2. Shopping.
3. Your child staying at home because a parent or sibling is ill.
4. Having a haircut.
5. Family holidays.
6. Pupils or parents attending appointments to organise passports.

All such absences need to be avoided in the interest of ensuring that your child develops a good habit of attending school regularly, allowing them to fulfil their potential academically, socially and emotionally.

### **Procedures**

#### **On the first day of and any further absence**

If your child is ill or is absent for any reason, please phone or email the School Office for every day of absence, giving your reason for keeping them at home. If you fail to contact the School to inform them where your child is, the school will contact you via text message asking you to call. If not contact is made, then school will call by telephone and if still no contact, then a house visit may be made.

#### **If you need to request a period of authorised absence**

Holidays in term-time will not be authorised. The attendance coding system no longer allows any Cheshire East schools to authorise term time holidays. Any specific absence requests will only be authorised for **exceptional circumstances**. It is important to note that a child who is authorised to take a 10-day absence during an academic year can only attain 94.7% attendance. If you need to make a request for a period of absence, this is to be made to Mrs McIntosh (Headteacher) in writing.

Please submit your request to Mrs McIntosh as early as possible, so that there is time for the request to be considered and for approval to be given if appropriate (Minimum of 21 days' notice). Mrs McIntosh will make a decision on your request and notify parents accordingly.

Although each request will be considered individually, we will never normally authorise a period of absence in term time under the following circumstances:

- At the beginning or the end of school terms/half terms
- Where the child is persistently late resulting in a substantial period of lost classroom time
- Where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health.

**Absence will not be authorised during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.**

- All requests will be considered individually and such factors as existing attendance record will be considered in making the decision whether to grant leave e.g. absence will not be authorised if it takes a pupils absence record below 90%.
- Holiday taken during term-time, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence is unauthorised (truancy). The deliberate taking of holiday in term time and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 sessions, may result in parents being liable to a penalty notice (£160 per child /per parent)
- If a pupil fails to return within ten school days of absence, and there is not good reason for this absence, the school, in discussion with the Attendance and Children out of School Service may report them as missing in education.

**Vulnerable children**

The attendance officer at Brierley works closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior Leadership Team to track and monitor the attendance of vulnerable children regularly and work closely with families and external professionals such as social workers, family support workers and health visitors to improve attendance.

Please refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and our Child Protection Policy for more information about Vulnerable children.

**Tracking Attendance**

**If your child is absent from school more than they should be:**

At the end of each half term the School Office will use its computer system to analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place.

**We send letters for the following reasons:**

**Stage 1: Attendance below 95% for the first time** - Letter sent to parents to say their child's attendance is causing some concern. This letter will set out the expectations for school attendance and will clearly explain the impact of poor attendance on children's education. The letter will also include contact details for the Senior Attendance Champion in the event that parents require further support.

**Stage 2: Attendance falls below 90% or attendance from the first term hasn't improved with no identifiable reason** – An appointment will be made for parents to meet with the Senior Attendance Champion in order to discuss patterns of attendance. This meeting will include details of the direct impact poor attendance may have had personally on the individual in question in addition to school working with the family to resolve attendance issues. This may mean offering Targeted Family Support or Extra Help where school may signpost parents for further support or making referrals to other appropriate professionals.

The attendance officer will not authorise absence through school spider and parents are expected to ring and speak to the attendance officer in person to explain their child's absence.

**If, following stages 1 and 2, there has been no significant improvement** – An appointment will be made for a meeting with Mrs McIntosh (Headteacher) to discuss attendance issues. If parents have

not engaged with the support from school and/or further services in order to improve their child's attendance, an attendance contract may be introduced with parental engagement and support.

An attendance contract will include:

- Details of the requirements the parent(s) is expected to comply with.
- A statement from the school and/or local authority agreeing to provide support to the parent(s) to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support.
- A statement by the parent that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period of time specified by the contract.

**In the unlikely event of there still being no improvement** – Where there has been no improvement in attendance through lack of engagement from parents, this could lead to additional fixed penalty notices and potential prosecution.

**The Attendance and Children out of School Team has access to attendance figures and unauthorised absence data. If they are unhappy that attendance is not being improved in these extreme cases the Local Authority is likely to take action against families where persistent absence is a problem.**

### Penalty Notices

**Term time leave:** Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

**10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-week period:** A Penalty Notice may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10-week period. However, we retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above threshold.

**Per Parent / Per Child** – Penalty Notice fine will be issued per parent per child. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving three separate fines.

**First Offence:** The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. Unpaid penalty notices may result in parental prosecution.

**Second Offence:** Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution.

**Third Offence:** On the third time than an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. This case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school', the Magistrates can impose a fine up to £1000 or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to £2500.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

