

Brinsley Primary and Nursery School

School Policy for

Attendance and Exceptional Leave

Updated: January 2018

Review: January 2019

Attendance and Exceptional Leave Policy

Introduction

At Brinsley Primary and Nursery School we believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised. Even short periods of absence can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines so, in addition to affecting your own child, it may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Nottinghamshire Local Authority (LA) is committed to working with, and supporting schools, parents/carers and children to ensure that every child achieves the highest level of attendance at school. The LA is also committed to working in partnership with other agencies who can contribute to an holistic approach to improving school attendance.

Targeted Support will lead on school attendance for the LA and will ensure that all other relevant agencies are engaged in the support of particularly vulnerable children and groups, including children in public care and Traveller children.

Expectations

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent/carer. Any absences should be explained, verbally or in writing to the teacher concerned with, if possible, the predicted date of return.

At Brinsley Primary and Nursery School, we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. We strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Parents/carers should remember that the more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom partaking of the complete lesson sequence. Children can also suffer socially when absent from their peers for any period of time.

Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy

- Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents/guardians. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an

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attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- There is no automatic right to any leave of absence. All schools in the Selston Family have adopted a policy of not authorising exceptional leave. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the school grant leave of absence during term time. Each request is individually assessed by the Head Teacher.

The Education Act 2002 places the responsibility for enforcing school attendance on the LA. This responsibility is delegated to Targeted Support.

Legal action will be instigated against parents/carers in relevant circumstances using the wide range of available options including:

- Penalty notices
- School attendance orders
- Section 444 (1) and (1) (a) of the Education Act 2002.

Monitoring attendance.

Although the law distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absence, it is the overall attendance of pupils that is crucial. At Brinsley Primary and Nursery School our current attendance target for children of compulsory school age is 96%. This target is reviewed on an annual basis. The LA also has a target to reduce absence that will be monitored annually.

Brinsley Primary and Nursery School, like all other schools, has a legal duty to publish figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. School staff are committed to working with parents in order to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day. This document records whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory age is absent, every session of absence must be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not the parents/carers. It is, therefore, essential that information about the cause of each absence is required, preferably in writing.

Where no notification has been received by 9:30am (close of registers) a call will be made by a member of the school office staff to ascertain the whereabouts of the missing child/children. If a child arrives at school after 9.30am (close of the registers) their mark will be a U which is deemed as unauthorised absence. If there is doubt about the whereabouts of any child/children it may be deemed necessary to make home visits or to call the Police.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. In these situations, school will work closely with the family to nurture a better pattern of attendance. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to

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pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may perpetuate the situation. Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.

For further information about the monitoring of attendance at Brinsley Primary and Nursery School, please refer to the Attendance Concern Flowchart in Appendix 1 and the samples of letters which are distributed to parents/carers in Appendix 2.

Reward

All children who achieve 100% attendance for an entire term are rewarded by certificate in our end of term assembly. At the end of the academic year, the children who have achieved 100% attendance for that year are rewarded by certificate and have the opportunity to win a new bike.

Each week classes achieving 100% attendance are announced. The class with the best attendance win a pizza/ice cream and DVD party.

Notification of absence

When the child returns to school, the parent or carer must explain the absence to a member of staff. If this does not occur, the school will send a letter to request the information.

Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, the parent or carer should notify the school prior to the day of absence.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence refers to mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or another unavoidable cause. Registers are marked with a relevant code to distinguish between the different reasons for non-attendance. A list of these codes can be found in Appendix 3.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent or carer.

The following will not be authorised:

- Parents keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained (documented evidence will be needed in the case of persistent illness)
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

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School have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/carer or have general concerns about the absence. This referral is made to Targeted Support.

An absence may be classified as unauthorised if there has been a consistent period of absence with the same verbal reason but no additional evidence provided or where a senior member of staff has reason to believe that the reason for absence given is inaccurate.

Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence is marked as unauthorised.

Where the parents keep the child away for longer than agreed then the extra time is also marked unauthorised.

Exceptional Leave

Exceptional leave during the School Day

Parents are expected to arrange medical appointments out of school hours where possible. Children must not be taken out of school without a previously written agreement (unless in an emergency). Parents must report to the school office, enabling the school staff to collect children from the classroom.

On return to school during the day parents must inform the school office staff so that the register can be adjusted accordingly.

Parents should inform the school office of any unexpected events which may result in a delayed return to school.

Exceptional leave during Term Time

We follow Local Authority guidance on parents taking children out of school for leave during term time, which is **not** to authorise, and absence for this purpose will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Exceptional Leave of Absence will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

Requests for Exceptional Leave

- Except in an emergency, permission must be sought from the school at least **4 weeks** before the exceptional leave is due to begin and in advance of making any arrangements. The request must be made on an **Exceptional Leave of Absence Form**, which can be obtained from the school office (see Appendix 4).
- Evidence of any travel bookings, if applicable, may be requested by the school.

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- Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Headteacher. Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the child's records and will be shared as part of the transfer / transition process.
- Any unauthorised absence of longer than three days, within any 6 week period, will lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued in line with the Local Authority guidance.

Missing children

If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

Long-term absence through Child's Accident or illness

If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Policy Appendices

Appendix 1 – attendance flow chart

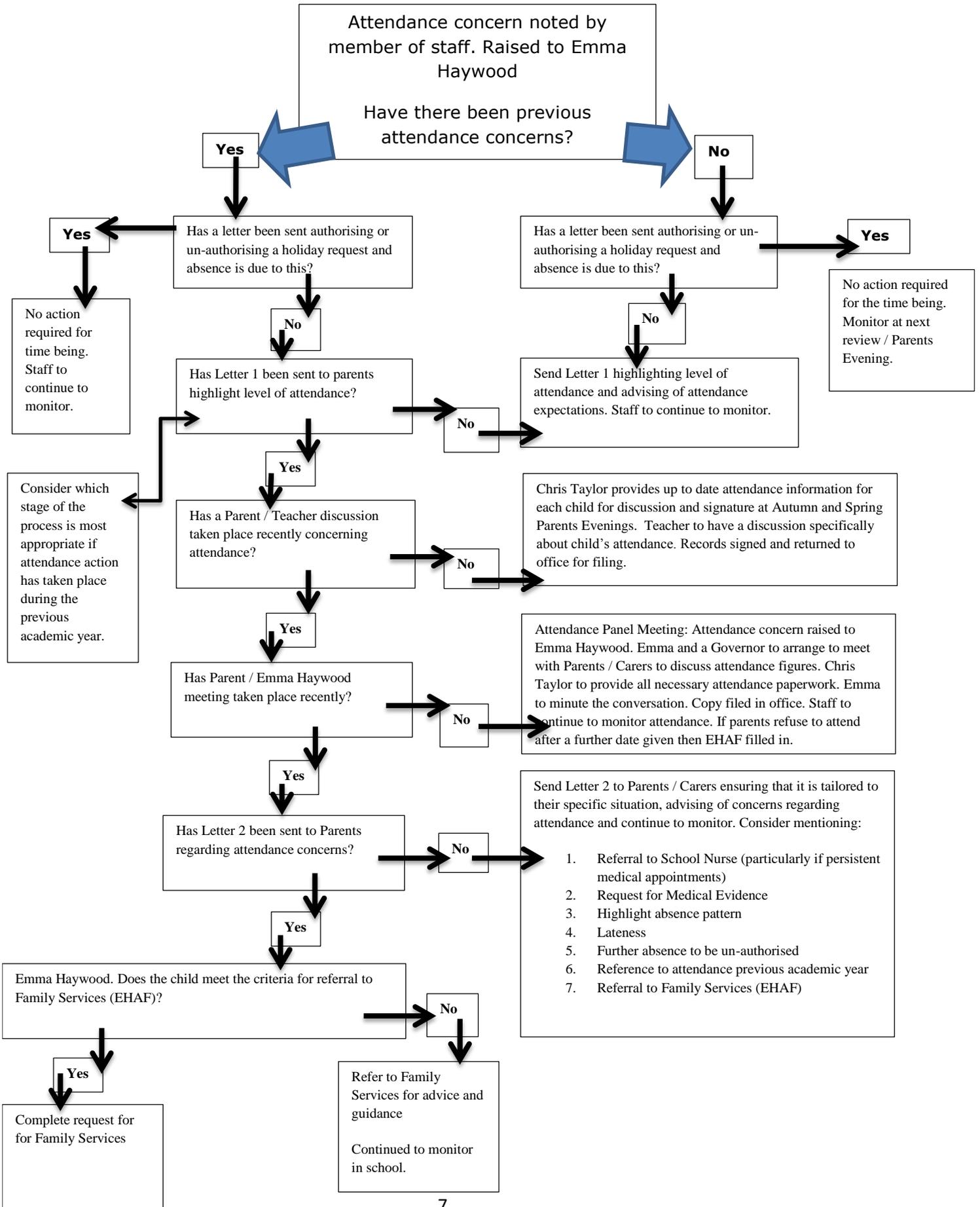
Appendix 2 – sample letters sent to parents/carers

Appendix 3 – register codes

Appendix 4 – sample Leave of Absence form

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Brinsley Primary and Nursery School Attendance Concern Flowchart



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Attendance Letter

DATE

Dear Parent / Carer

Attendance

At Brinsley Primary and Nursery School we are passionate about every child reaching their full potential. As it has been proven that attainment can be closely linked to attendance each child's attendance target is set at **96%**. For this reason we feel it is important to highlight that **child's name's** current attendance is ...% so far this academic year.

We understand that some absences are unavoidable, however, as this may impact upon your child's progress, we hope that you will support us in keeping any future absences to a minimum in order that **child's name's** overall attendance improves over the coming months.

Should you wish to discuss your child's attendance with a member of staff please request a meeting with myself or your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E Haywood

Headteacher.

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Persistent Late Letter example

Date

Address

Dear Parent/Carer

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of pupils, we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions. We are, therefore, writing to you due to *...pupil name...*'s current number of late sessions.

Attendance	Current attendance %
Number of late sessions	Current AA%
Number of "unauthorised" lates	Current UA %

Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day.

5 minutes late every day	=	3 days of school lost a year
10 minutes late every day	=	6.5 days of school lost a year
15 minutes late every day	=	10 days of school lost a year
20 minutes late every day	=	13 days of school lost a year
30 minutes late every day	=	19 days of school lost a year

We understand that the school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. If your child arrives 30 minutes after the register has been taken, they will have an "unauthorised" late mark – this is the same as an "unauthorised absence".

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me on 01773 783898.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E Haywood

Head Teacher

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Medical Letter 2 example

DATE

Dear Parent / Carer

Attendance

Following on from previous meetings regarding attendance we are writing to advise you about our concerns regarding **child's name's** attendance which is **...%** so far this academic year. We know that since the start of the academic year **child's name** has been absent from school on numerous occasions due to illness. In total **number** days (**numbers weeks**) have been missed out of a total of **number** school weeks.

It has been proven that pupils with this level of attendance find it impossible to keep up with or catch up on school work. Please be aware that in view of the length of **child's name's** absences we will have to ask you for a medical evidence letter (ie a letter from **child's name's** doctor or hospital consultant) in order to authorise future absences. As a result of **child's name's** attendance falling below national expectations we may have no choice but to refer **child's name's** to the Nottinghamshire County Council's Targeted Support Service to see if they can support **child's name** in ensuring that **his / her** overall attendance at school improves.

If you would like to discuss attendance or you require any support or advice please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E Haywood

Headteacher.

Register Codes

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/	AM Present
\	PM Present
B	Educated off site (not dual registered)
C	Other authorised Circumstances
D	Dual registered
E	Excluded
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)
H	Family Holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before register closes)
M	Medical/Dental Appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers close)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
-	All should attend – no mark recorded

Leave of Absence Form

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APPLICATION BY PARENT/CAREER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name Tutor/Group/Class

Home Address

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:
 Date of Last day at School Date of Return to School

Total number of school days missed:

Could you please explain the circumstances that make it necessary to have a holiday in term time?

Do you expect to be taking any more term time holidays this academic year?

I confirm application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and they face the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/Carer making application

Signed

Date

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE
 Please do not book your holiday until you know that the school will authorise your child's absence

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