



# **Ball Green Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

Updated November 2020

Ball Green Primary School is committed to raising the achievement of all pupils. One of the ways we do this is by promoting good attendance and punctuality. We expect our pupils to attend regularly, so that they benefit fully from all the opportunities we provide for their education, progress and achievement. We always welcome positive communication and parents are always welcome to discuss their child's attendance.

### Parental Responsibility

Under section 444 of the Education Act of 1996, parents, or those who have parental responsibility for children of compulsory school age, are required to ensure that their children receive an efficient full time education. Children are required to attend and to stay at school.

This responsibility also extends to ensuring that the children arrive at school on time, suitably dressed and in a fit condition to learn.

It is also the parent's responsibility to inform school of the reasons for their child's non-attendance as soon as possible, preferably on the first day of absence.

### Procedures for reporting absence

By telephone, no later than 9.30am on the first day of absence.

By message on Class Dojo direct to Mrs Fleetham, no later than 9.30am.

By letter, delivered to the school office.

In person, at the school office.

By showing an appointment card or letter in advance, at the school office.

By completing an application of leave of absence in exceptional circumstances in term time, which is available from the school office.

It is requested that reasons for absence are not sent as a message via a child or another parent/carer as they tend not to be passed on.

### Authorised Absence

The Headteacher has the ultimate responsibility for authorising absences and will do so when a valid reason is given for the child's absence.

### Unauthorised Absence

An unauthorised absence will be given when a child does not attend school and a valid reason is not given for the absence or the Headteacher refuses to authorise a leave of absence request.

Where a child has had 3 days absence or more, the school reserves the right to unauthorise all further absence unless medical evidence is provided.

### Medical and Dental Appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during the school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible then authorisation will be given where confirmation of the appointment is received via one of the methods already listed. Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents expected to return their children to school following the appointment whenever possible.

### Procedure for taking a child out of school during the school day

Parents/carers report to the school office. The child is collected from class by the office staff. The absence is recorded in a book with the reason, time and whether the child is returning to school.

### Special Occasions

A request to attend a special occasion during school time e.g. family wedding, must be made in advance and the Headteacher will make the decision as to whether to authorise the absence. Parents will be notified of the Headteacher's decision.

### Bereavement

The school is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events. The Headteacher will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

### Days of Religious Observance

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted authorised absence. The Headteacher should be consulted in advance of the event. A maximum of two days' absence during any academic year will be granted for religious observance.

### Lateness

Parents are expected to bring their children punctually for the start of the school day, with lessons beginning at 9.00am prompt. Doors open for pupils at 8.30am and Registration opens. Children arriving after 9.00am must report with their parents to the school office where they will be registered via the late arrival system. They will receive a late mark in their class register. Children arriving after 9.05am without an adequate explanation from their parents will be given an unauthorised absence for the session. Families who regularly arrive late will be contacted by the Attendance Team or Headteacher. Education Welfare may become involved if the problem cannot be quickly resolved. An unauthorised late mark can constitute as an absence and may be subject to the issuing of a penalty notice.

### Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

The Law states that parents DO NOT have an automatic right to take their child out of school in term-time.

By prior application, you may apply for a Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances. This will be considered in line with Government and Local Authority guidance. The parent/guardian should apply for a leave of absence by completing an Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances in Term Time form, available from the school office. The school will notify the parent/guardian of the decision.

The Headteacher is unable to authorise leave of absence if the request is for holiday during term time. Parents taking children out of school for holiday during term time may be requested to meet with the Headteacher. Any unauthorised absence may lead to the school involving the Education Welfare Service and seek to issue a Local Authority Penalty Notice (fine) for such absences.

Where we do not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Where permission has been given for a leave of absence and it is later found that the child has spent the time at home this will then be counted as an unauthorised absence.

#### Procedure For The Issue Of Penalty Notices

The issue of penalty notices will be strictly administered by the Education Welfare Team. Therefore, no penalty notices will be issued without the issue of relevant warning notices and the pursuance of relevant assessment of the case.

The Local Authority may consider it appropriate to issue penalty notices if, following due assessment, where a parent is capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance, additional evidence of unacceptable levels of unauthorised absence is present to render appropriate such action.

In the case where the penalty has not been paid within 28 days of issue, the Education Welfare Team will instigate statutory action under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

#### School Procedures

In managing the attendance and punctuality of its pupils, the school will:

1 Keep appropriate attendance records.

Registers are taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marks are regularly entered on to the computerised register on the office computer.

Accurate information on attendance is available to designated employees and data gathered will be used to inform the governing body of attendance and punctuality trends. This information will enable governors and senior staff to effectively target attendance and punctuality as necessary. The Attendance Team will monitor and review requests for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances in Term Time.

2 Monitor patterns of attendance.

The Headteacher in liaison with administration staff and the Education Welfare Officer will regularly review registers in order to work with families whose patterns of attendance or punctuality are unsatisfactory. All parents will be informed, via the annual report, of their child's overall attendance and their attendance compared to the average for the school.

3 Involve the Education Welfare Officer.

The Headteacher and Attendance Team, through regular meetings with the EWO will discuss issues surrounding attendance and punctuality. If there is cause for concern, the following procedures will be followed:

- The Attendance Team will speak to the parents of the child.
- A letter may be sent home raising the concerns by either the school or the Education Welfare Service as is most appropriate.

Parents may be invited into school to talk to the Attendance Team, Headteacher or the EWO informally. If informal intervention is unsuccessful, then an official referral to the EWO will be made by the school. The EWO may visit the home.

Throughout these procedures, the Headteacher and the EWO will regularly discuss ongoing cases.

**If no improvement is seen** in the child's attendance or **attendance falls below 90%** a penalty notice may be issued.

We work very closely with the Local Authority Education Welfare Service and follow their Policies and Code of Conduct regarding Attendance. In the first instance parents are invited to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance with our Attendance Team. However, if you wish to speak to an Education Welfare Officer, the contact number is **01782 235355**.

### Encouraging Attendance

There are a variety of rewards schemes at the school to encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality. The Home School Agreement which is signed by staff, parents and the pupil contains a section specifically relating to attendance and punctuality. This is discussed at open evenings and school community awareness of the attendance policy is raised at every opportunity.

### Strategies for Improving Attendance and Punctuality

Class with best weekly attendance is praised in Awards Assembly.

The class with the best termly attendance has extra playtime.

Pupils with 100% annual attendance will have a reward activity in school.

Termly certificates for pupils with full attendance.

An Annual certificate for pupils with full attendance.

Attendance Week focusing on promoting regular attendance and celebrating success.