



BANOVALLUM SCHOOL
HORNCastle

A WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

November 2019

1. MISSION STATEMENT:

Banovallum School is committed to providing a full and effective education for all pupils. The school believes that all pupils benefit from education and from regular school attendance. To this end it will organise and do all it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are acted upon as quickly as possible.

2. AIMS:

It is recognised that

- all pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations;
- no pupils should be deprived of their opportunities by either their own non-attendance or that of other pupils from receiving an education that meets their needs and personal development;
- in the first instance it is the responsibility of pupils and their parent/carer to ensure attendance at school as required by law;
- situations may exist beyond the control of pupils and/or parents which schools need to address in partnership with external agencies;
- the vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer groups and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well - rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

3. EXPECTATIONS:

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- That they will attend school regularly;
- That they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day;
- That they will inform a member of staff / tutor of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents/carers: (cf. Appendix 3)

- To encourage their children to attend school regularly and on time.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend preferably by 9.00 am of day one;
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework;
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep them away from school.
- To support us in dealing with persistent late offenders.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school with regard to attendance:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason;
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- That good attendance will be encouraged and praised;

4. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE:

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the electronic registers at the beginning of each session and within 10 minutes of the start of the session;
- Attendance checks at appropriate time;
- Recording/reporting of attendance on individual student reports;
- Certificates every half term for pupils with 100% Gold, 99-98% Silver and 96-97% Bronze. Pupils with 100% attendance for the full term (Christmas, Easter and Summer) are put into a draw to win a prize.
- Staff are encouraged to monitor tutees attendance on a weekly basis.
- Epraise points are awarded weekly for students who achieve 100% attendance and no lates.
- All awards to be awarded by Tutors / Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher and / or Governors as appropriate;
- Targeting and visiting pupils who have attendance problems in the feeder primary as part of liaison between KS2 and KS3;
- Having an open door policy for those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school;
- Sending parents/carers absence figures regularly or **as appropriate** facilitated by the computer attendance package SIMS.
- The efficient use of computerised registration systems can provide valuable, year group, form and pupil level attendance data which can assist speedy analysis and timely responses by the school.

5. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:

When a pupil does not attend the school needs to respond effectively.

- If a parent//carer has not contacted school, the parents/carers will be contacted by the school office staff on the first day of absence by telephone and/or text by midday. These calls are logged by the Office staff.
- Concerns for persistent non attendance (persistent absenteeism) are monitored by the Attendance Officer. Letters of concern are issued if the absence is considered to be unauthorised, unacceptable or if the level of attendance means that the pupil is categorised as/or at risk of becoming a persistent absentee (i.e. 10% non-attendance of any type.) In certain circumstances, a home visit may be undertaken by the Attendance Officer / Education Welfare Consultant and/or a member of the Student Support team.
- In continued cases of non-attendance, the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Consultant for the school and further action planned. This may, in appropriate cases, result in a referral to the EWC e.g. pupils with 15% absence in a six-week period. 10 days continuous unexplained absence is a statutory safeguarding concern, which in most cases will result in the school contacting Children's Services.
- Where there are concerns over absence, parents and pupils may be invited to an School Attendance Panel meeting. This meeting may include the Attendance Officer, Education Welfare Consultant and of a Governor. This meeting will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school and an action plan will be formulated. In the case of non-attendance by parents and pupil a plan will be formulated in their absence which will be posted to parents inviting them to an arranged review date.

- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with the Educational Welfare Consultant with a view to a formal referral being made, if one has not been made at an earlier stage. If a referral had already been made then the case will be reviewed and the meeting used to plan further action.
- Ultimately, a Fixed Penalty Fine may be issued of up to £120 per parent per child under Section 444(B) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure regular attendance at school or Legal Proceedings may begin.

Reintegration:

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning;
- The appropriate staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme;
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible;
- Programmes may need to be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required.
- Paperwork will need to be completed for students receiving less than 25 hours education.
- The success of the programme will also require liaison between the appropriate staff, parents and EWO and any other support agencies involved.
- Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the staff notice board /staff briefings/email.

6. SCHOOL ORGANISATION:

In order for any policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils by their behaviour, the importance of the education being provided. This means ensuring that all staff arrive to lessons on time and are well prepared.

In addition to these there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff groups such as the following:

Headteacher

- To oversee the whole policy;
- To report to governors.

or Assistant Headteacher (with responsibility for Attendance)

- To oversee the work of the Attendance Officer.
- To liaise with teaching staff and Student Support team;
- To oversee the operation of the attendance system and the collation of attendance data;
- To oversee the work of administrative staff;
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school;
- To report to Senior Management Team on attendance matters;
- To liaise with EWC as necessary.

- To oversee the registration process and ensure that electronic registers are completed accurately and on time;
- To reinforce good practice at tutor meetings;
- To initiate contact with parents in cases of prolonged unexplained absence;
- To organise returns of long term absentees in conjunction with the SEN department.
- To oversee the work of the Attendance Officer in their Family Link Worker role.

Form Tutor

- To complete electronic registers accurately and on time;
- To record all known reasons for absence;
- To inform Attendance Officer of concerns.

Governors

- Governor(s) may be given specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies i.e. sitting on School Attendance Panels as and when requested.
- Governor(s) have a duty to report on attendance and have a responsibility to approve/update statistics for the school to parents/carers.

Parents/Carers

- Contact with school on 1st day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Inform the school of all known absences.
- Support for general attendance and punctuality.

Education Welfare accessed by the school buying in time from the Education Welfare Consultant.

- Liaise with Attendance Officer, Assistant Headteacher and SENCO as appropriate.
- Home visits, either pre - arranged or without notice as considered necessary;
- Case load work as necessary and as appropriate

Office Staff/Attendance Officer

- To follow-up immediately any unexplained non-attendance;
- Lateness to be recorded in electronic register (not those on buses).
- Produce updates from weekly electronic registers, absence code sheets, weekly % information;
- Telephone absence messages to be recorded on system provided the call is considered genuine.
- Produce statistics and printouts as requested by Assistant Headteacher
- Maintain a signing in/out book.
- To inform Attendance Officer/Assistant Headteacher of any concerns.

7. LIAISON WITH VARIOUS AGENCIES WHEREVER APPROPRIATE

Good relations and working practices are essential. Agencies have a difficult role in that they endeavour to support the school in meeting its legal obligations as well as the home and the pupil to ensure the latter's educational opportunities are maximised

to the full. Some parents need the support of these agencies to ensure that they can fulfil their legal obligations to their children. The school works with Social Care, Family Support Workers, Youth Offending Services, Counselling Services, Mental Health services, Addaction and Action for Young Carers amongst many others.

Educational Welfare Consultant

- a) The Education Welfare Consultant will continue to work closely with teachers, pupils and their families in a variety of areas which impinge on school attendance. These may include behaviour problems, exclusions, special educational needs, child protection, child employment and children in entertainment and any other problems that prevent a young person benefiting fully from the educational opportunities available to them;
- b) The Education Welfare Consultant can support the school in the following ways:
 - accepting referrals;
 - home visiting to make an assessment of the problems;
 - liaison or mediation between school and home;
 - working with the family, the school and the young person to resolve the problems;
 - On behalf of the school support the Attendance Officer when making/following up referrals for fixed penalties to be issued to parents for Persistent Absenteeism;
 - where necessary, instigating legal proceedings on behalf of the LEA in the Magistrates Court or the Family Court;
 - offering professional advice, guidance and support about pupil welfare issues;
 - working in partnership with schools to develop sensitive individual re-integration packages for long term absentees;
 - work on specific attendance projects;
 - advice on the collection and analysis of attendance data;
 - will support schools in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Other agencies are to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

For example:

- Red Tree Counselling
- Educational Psychologists
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Social Care
- School Nurse
- Careers guidance
- Community Health Advisory Worker

Research has shown that schools in partnership with support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are not co-ordinated or disjointed. This can be accessed by the use of Early Help Assessment via the schools Family Welfare Officer. The completion of this assessment enables external agencies to be involved with TAC process.

APPENDIX 1.

GUIDANCE FOR FORM TUTORS and SUPPLY TEACHERS

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to see that their child(ren) receive an education that meets their needs according to their abilities and aptitudes.

The Importance of Registration

- An electronic attendance register must be kept in which, at the BEGINNING of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.
- Electronic registers must be taken each lesson to spot check any truanancies and patterns of subject non- attendance as well as ensure the safety of all students.
- Failure of ePortal – paper registers will be issued.
- In the case of a fire drill paper registers will used to check attendance against either the am or pm registration mark.

Categorising Absence

Symbols to be used in Registers (Categories)

From 1 September 2006 all schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfE) believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems are capable of producing the data necessary for absence returns to DfES without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and actual absences.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both LA's and DfE in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

- **Only the school**, in the context of the law, **can approve absence**, not parents. If school does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Attendance Officer / Assistant Headteacher Attendance.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Attendance Officer / Assistant Headteacher.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the electronic register by the appropriate code.
- Office Staff who experience difficulty in receiving a parental reason should inform Attendance Officer / Student Support or Assistant Headteacher Attendance.

Family Holidays

- The school does not accept and therefore will not authorise any requests for holidays or leave of absence taken during term time except under exceptional circumstances. Requests must be put in writing to the Headteacher at least two weeks before the requested date of absence.

- The school may ask the LEA to issue a Fixed Penalty fine of up to £120 per parent per child under Section 444(B) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure regular attendance at school.
- Exceptional circumstances must be discussed on a case by case basis with parents and the Headteacher or a delegated member of staff.
- If leave of absence is granted then a H code will be registered for the duration of the period of absence up to and no more than 10 school days.
- If leave of absence is not granted then a G code will be registered to signify unauthorised holiday absence.

Authorised or Unauthorised Absence

Authorised - For example:

- Illness: I
- Family bereavements: C
- Leave of absence granted under exceptional circumstances: H:
- Medical/dental appointments (if there is evidence of the appointment): M
- Days of religious observance: R
- Interviews with advance notification: J
- Work experience: W
- Off-site activities: B
- Special tuition e.g. dyslexia: B
- Temporary exclusion: E
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll: E
- Study leave for Y11 (max. of 2 weeks), if granted: S
- Off-site education: B

Unauthorised - For example:

- Shopping trips;
- Unauthorised holidays: G
- Minding the house/looking after siblings (EWC to be contacted);
- Lateness - if registration is missed without explanation;
- No evidence of an appointment with doctor/dentist;
- Interviews with no advance/adequate explanation;
- Absence from work experience without good reason;
- School feels parental note is invalid;
- No explanation of absence is forthcoming;
- Y11 pupils leaving before the official date.

Lateness

- For the purpose of good discipline, a pupil will be deemed late if they arrive after the tutor has completed the electronic register, no later than 8:50am.
- If a pupil misses registration, she/he must report to the school office on arrival to school. Pupils will receive their mark with the letter 'L' and number of minutes late.

Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date

Schools should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'.

Pupils who are missing

From 31st October 2016, schools will be expected to notify the local authority of all children missing education (CME) through the online data exchange survey. The CME process will then be followed and at the point when the local authority and school jointly decide that the whereabouts of the child cannot be ascertained, the school must use the survey to notify the local authority that they are removing the child from roll under **Grounds 8(1) f** (*the pupil has failed to attend the school within the 10 days immediately following the expiry of the period for which leave was authorised*) or **Grounds 8(1) h** (*the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for an unauthorised period of not less than 20 school days*).

Removal from the school roll

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended 1997) and in the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2). **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**

- Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school.
- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the Local Authority that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.
- Where the school has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.
- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Headteacher of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Consultant to obtain information on the cause of the absence.
- Where the Head Teacher has been notified that the pupil has died.
- Where a pupil in the nursery class has not transferred to a reception class at the school.
- Except in the case of a boarder, the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school.

- If a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.
- Where a pupil will cease to be of compulsory age before the school next meets and has been notified an intention to discontinue in attendance.
- Where a pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

APPENDIX 2

This section consists of a summary of research into attendance published by Dr David Hargreaves, (cf. Appendix 4. - Bibliography)

Research suggests that good practice is associated with:

1. A senior teacher being charged with specific responsibility for pupil attendance.
2. A list of absentees being produced quickly, ideally by morning break, for use by appropriate teaching and office staff.
3. The school devising a sensitive scheme for the immediate follow-up of absentees - e.g. either by telephoning home or sending out letters to parents or guardians.
4. Records of attendance are as accurate as possible and explanations for absence are produced.
5. Form Tutors monitor the attendance records of tutor groups.
6. Attendance Officer with overall responsibility for pupil attendance having meetings every two weeks with the Education Welfare Consultant.
7. Regular spot-checks for specific lesson truancy and for pupils leaving school before the end of the day, being enacted at intervals.
8. Rewards introduced for individual pupils or classes with an excellent attendance record in the form of Epraise points, certificates or prizes.
9. Penalties being introduced for pupils who are persistently late.
10. Absentees and truants being quietly welcomed back to school upon their return and efforts made to reintegrate them socially and academically.

SOURCE: "Improving Secondary Schools" 1984 Dr David Hargreaves

APPENDIX 3.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Suggestions for securing parental involvement in ensuring regular attendance.

Our school is committed to providing a complete education for all pupils. We believe that all pupils benefit from the education in our school and from regular school attendance. We will try to make sure that all pupils gain the maximum possible attendance and we will make sure that any problems, which prevent full attendance, are identified and acted upon promptly. The school will make contact with parents where a pupil is absent from school without good reason.

How parents/carers can help us:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time;
- Contact the school whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason for the absence and the length of time the child will be away;
- Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and the child has everything she/he needs for the day ahead;
- Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect the child;
- Contact the school if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.
- Support us when detentions are given for 3 times late in any one half term.

APPENDIX 4

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Lincs County Council Whole School Attendance Policy Guidelines June 2002
- Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service Information for Schools 2002-03
- Education observed No 13 - "Attendance at School"
- Education Welfare Service/Positive Behaviour Team - "A Whole School Approach to Attendance" training pack
- Enhancing Attendance - a teacher's guide to improving pupil attendance
Editors - Malcolm MacDonald and Brian Daly
Northumberland County Council (1996)
- Leeds Attendance Project Teachers - "Formulating an Attendance Policy"
- Leeds Education Welfare Service - "Guidelines for Practice"
- Dr D H Hargreaves - "Improving Secondary Schools" ILEA
- The Elton Report - "Discipline in Schools" HMSO
- Education of Travelling Children OFSTED Ref. HMR/12/96/NS (1996)
- Travellers Information Handbook Lincolnshire Traveller Education Service
- Absent from School - David Howe Bracken Press
- Troubled and Vulnerable Children Practical Guide for Heads
Shelagh Webb, Croner Publications (cf. Chapter 4)
- Lincolnshire County Council – "Notification of Roll Change and Children Missing Education Data Collection.

DFES Circulars:

- Pupil Behaviour and Discipline
- Education of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
- Exclusions from School
- Education by LEAs of Children otherwise than at School
- Education of Sick Children
- Education of Children being looked after by Local Authorities
- Raising Achievement of Gypsy Traveller Pupils

Person responsible: Assistant Headteacher

Date of next review: September 2019