

Whole School Attendance Policy

Beverley High School



Date: December 2013
Review: December 2016

Whole School Attendance Policy

The Governors and Staff of Beverley High School (BHS) fully recognise the importance of safeguarding children and play a full and active part in protecting pupils from harm. In developing the Whole School Attendance Policy due consideration has been given to the Beverley High School Child Protection Policy and the East Riding Safeguarding Children Board's (ERSCB) Procedures.

Philosophy

Beverley High School considers attendance to be of paramount importance. Without good attendance the best efforts of teachers will not have the maximum effect on the learning processes. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage and places children at risk.

Linked Documents

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy.
- SEND Policy.
- Single Equality Scheme.
- Health and Safety Policy with (particular reference to Appendix A).
- Pupil Behaviour and School Discipline Policy
- School Visits and Events Policy.
- Staff guidance – Highly Confidential Information, referred to as Master Document
- Individual Pupil /Staff First Aid Guidelines/Management Plans.
- Access to Education for Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Policy (ERYC 2013)

Statutory Position

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 *parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education.

Parents are thus primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend all lessons at Beverley High School. It is the responsibility of Beverley High School to monitor attendance and to take seriously, and act upon problems which are leading to non-attendance.

****For the rest of this document “parents” include all those with parental responsibility or have care of the child.***

Parental Responsibilities are to ensure that the child:

- achieves regular school attendance
- arrives on time for school
- is properly dressed and with the appropriate equipment for the school day.

Parents are asked to inform the school each morning that their child is absent and the reason for the absence.

School's Responsibilities

- To have a clear attendance policy this is communicated to parents.
- To inform parents about support services e.g. Educational Welfare Service and Wellbeing Team.
- To keep accurate records of attendance.

Beverley High School's Attendance Officer is Miss Chantelle Smith who is contactable on 01482 881658 or by emailing c.smith@beverleyhigh.net

Governors' Responsibilities

- To review attendance policies at regular intervals.

Recording of Attendance data

- The Education Pupils' Attendance Record regulations require that attendance registers must show whether an absence of a pupil is authorised or unauthorised.
- All pupils of compulsory school age are registered on a computerised system Sims. Pupils are marked either present, absent or late.

Authorised Absences:

Absences that the school can authorise include:

- Illness

It is necessary for the parent to state the full reason for their child's absence due to illness, e.g. 'ill' or 'unwell' are too general and reasons must be more precise e.g. 'tonsillitis.'

Progress Leaders, Wellbeing Team, Attendance Officer and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) will instigate a Reintegration Support Programme for pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence due to illness.

Work will be sent home during periods of absence at the discretion of the Progress Leader.

- Medical Appointments:

The school will authorise time off for medical appointments if proof of appointments is provided.

The school will only authorise the amount of time necessary for the appointment.

The NHS School Nurse and Educational Welfare Service (EWS) will be made aware of those pupils whose absences due to illness or medical needs are a concern to the school.

Further absences that the school may approve if an Absence From School For Exceptional Circumstances Request Form is completed and it is agreed that this is appropriate are:

- Absence on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
- Family bereavements
- Interviews: Evidence of the interview will be required
- Work Experience (if arranged by the school)
- Study leave (where agreed)
- Off-site activities, e.g. educational visits, music examinations. For activities not arranged by Beverley High School, evidence will be required before a decision is made to authorise the absence.

Notification of any absence from school should, wherever possible, be in advance to gain the necessary authorisation. Please contact the school's Attendance Officer for a copy of the Absence From School For Exceptional Circumstances Request Form.

We all need to bear in mind that excessive amounts of authorised absence can seriously disrupt continuity of learning. The school actively encourages communication with the Attendance Officer and Wellbeing Team.

Carers of children in the Looked After system of the Local Authority must ensure that any absence request is approved by the child's Social Worker prior to contacting the school.

Unauthorised Absences:

Where a pupil is absent without prior authorisation and an explanation acceptable to the school is not forthcoming, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Government legislation requires unauthorised absence to be placed on a pupil's record and these will be shared with the Education Welfare Service.

Those pupils who truant from school will be recorded as unauthorised. The school will inform the parents of their child's truancy and steps will be taken by the Wellbeing Team in line with the school's Pupil Behaviour and School Discipline Policy.

Only the school, within the context of the law, can authorise absence not parents.

Punctuality

It is the school's policy to encourage punctuality. Pupils arriving late to school disrupt their own and other's education.

Pupils must be on the school site and in their first lesson by 8:50am, therefore pupils arriving after this time will be treated as late and marked as an L on the register.

Pupils arriving between 8:50am and 9:00am will have their names recorded in the late book by the member of staff on gate duty. Pupils arriving after 9:00am must sign the late book at reception.

All pupils recorded in the late book will be required to attend a 10 minute late detention at break. Failure to attend the break detention will result in a 20 minute lunchtime detention that day. Those pupils who further fail to attend the lunchtime detention will be placed into an after school detention and parents will be informed by letter.

Addressing attendance concerns

- If no communication has been received on the first day of absence the School will contact home via a text message or telephone call.
- If no contact is made with home a letter will be sent and the Attendance Officer may make a Home Visit.
- If having followed the above procedures, attendance remains a concern then parents will be invited to attend a meeting in school.
- Following the meeting and appropriate intervention from school, if no further progress is made, the Attendance Officer will make an official referral to the Education Welfare Service and a discussion will take place involving the Attendance Officer and the (EWO), and a plan of action decided upon.
- This plan of action may include the EWO speaking to the pupil in school, an invitation for parents to come into school to discuss the problem or the EWO visiting the home.
- It may be necessary for the EWS to initiate legal action against parents in cases of persistent absence.

The role of the Education Welfare Service and persistent absences

- The Education Welfare Officer is employed by the Local Authority to liaise between the home and the school to ensure the regular attendance of pupils.
- Each school has a designated Education Welfare Officer.
- If your child's attendance falls **below 85%**, they will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service and you will be informed of this by letter.
- Referrals are made at this point because the Local Authority define '*persistent absentee*' as a pupil who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at 15%, or more of the available sessions regardless of whether these are authorised or unauthorised.

The Education Welfare Service also:

- Monitors and supports Looked After Children in education
- Monitors safety of children and young people in employment and entertainment
- Supports the education of pregnant school girls and school age parents
- Monitors and supports the education provided by parents who electively home educate

Advice and support can also be made available to you through the Education Welfare Service, by contacting the Education Welfare Service office on 01482 392146.

All children of compulsory school age are required, by law, to attend the school at which they are registered. Legal action can be taken, if it is considered that a parent or carer is not fulfilling their parental responsibility to ensure their child receives a full time education.

Failure to ensure regular attendance may result in the matter being placed before the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1a) of the Education Act 1996. Penalties can include fines up to £2,500 for each parent, consideration of a parenting order or a period of imprisonment.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced penalty notices as an additional sanction to address the problem of poor school attendance. This means that for pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e. any absence that the school has not given permission for) their parents or carers may be subject to a fine of up to £60 per parent for each child (increases to £120 if not paid within 28 days). If a child has more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 13 week period Beverley High School will issue a Penalty Notice. The school does not benefit financially from the fines.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available and if parents have any questions about this or need help to achieve an improvement then please contact the school to discuss the situation.

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