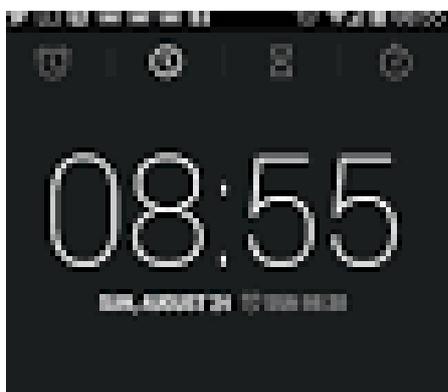




## Attendance Information



This booklet has been created to give you information to assist with your child's attendance whilst at the Beeches School. It also explains your responsibilities for making sure your child attends school regularly.

## Why is it important for children not to miss school?

Most parents want their children to get on well in life. Nowadays, it is more important than ever to have a good education behind you, if you want opportunities in adult life. Children only get one chance at school, and your child's chances of a successful future may be affected by not attending school regularly.

If children do not attend school regularly, they may not be able to keep up with school work. In a busy school day it is difficult for schools to find the extra time to help a child catch up. And it's not only the academic work: missing out on the social side of school life - especially at primary school - can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships, a vital part of growing up.

Setting good attendance patterns from an early age, from nursery classes through primary school, will also help your child later on. Employers want to recruit people who are reliable. So children who have a poor school attendance record may have less chance of getting a good job.

Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for your child, the teacher, and the other children in the class. **Children must be in class by 8.55am.**

## What does the law say?

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 18) must get a suitable, full-time education. As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school you are responsible for making sure he or she attends regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly - even if they miss school without you knowing - the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you (see overleaf). The LA is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities.

Parents are responsible for making sure that their registered children regularly attend school and any alternative provision arranged for them.

## What is the difference between authorised and unauthorised absences?

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not parents or carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments (proof of the appointment should be provided) which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional/unavoidable circumstance.

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. Ask to speak to myself or the child's class teacher to discuss any concerns.

## Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you, and your child, by making sure we always have an up to date number - if we don't then something important may be missed.

There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

## What about holidays in term time?

**Taking leave of absence without exceptional/unavoidable circumstance in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.** Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **NO** automatic entitlement in the law to grant time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional / unavoidable circumstances at the Headteacher's discretion.**

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

## What can I do to help?

If you suspect that your child may be missing school or is unhappy at school, you should contact the myself or the class teacher as soon as possible so that you can work with them to resolve any difficulties.

- Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of them missing school, but be on the alert for any particular reasons for non-attendance, such as bullying or problems with school work and discuss these with the class teacher.
- Follow the school's procedures for notifying absence, and always let the school know of any days that your child is unable to attend.
- Make sure your child arrives at school on time for both the morning and, if going home for lunch, the afternoon sessions.
- Take an interest in your child's education. Ask them about their day and praise and encourage their achievements at the school.
- Co-operate with any support, offered by the school.

## Absence Procedures:

### **If your child is absent you must:**

Contact us before 9.00am on each day of absence.

Please call the school and use option 1 to leave a message regarding your child's absence.

### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with us.
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carer for each child.

## Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

## Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School:

Failure to ensure regular school attendance without a valid explanation could result in the school requesting the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

✦ Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a period in any 8 school weeks and there is usually more than one instance (up to 3 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year).

✦ **A single unauthorised absence event of 4 or more sessions.**

✦ Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or more.

✦ **Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification contribute to a cumulative unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more over a period in any 8 school weeks;**

Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

## Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

We anticipate all the children to be in the playground at **8:40am**. The school day starts at **8:55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Once the school gates close at **8.55am**, your child will have to come in the main entrance and will receive a late mark.

Registers are marked by **9:00am**.

At **9:15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## Deletions from Register

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations

2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor (The Headteacher) in accordance with regulation 6 (2)

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any unavoidable cause