

If my child is late, is this an absence?

Students must be on site by 8.20am. If they arrive after this time, but before the AM register closes at 9.00am, they will be given a Late Before Registers Close Mark (L). This is not an absence but does impact on your child being ready to learn, receiving important information and having some friendship time.

If your child arrives after the AM registers have closed (9.00am) but during the morning session at some point without a legitimate reason, they will be marked as 'Late After Register Has Closed' (U). This is an absence and shows your child did not obtain their mark for the day's official AM registration session. However, for the purpose of fire regulations it shows that they have arrived on site at some point. If your child arrives after the registers have closed 6 times during a 6 week period, you will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

Why does the school require me to keep updating my contact details?

When your child is at school the school have 'loco parentis'. However, in the case of an emergency school would need to make contact with you to obtain permissions, for example a medical procedure if your child is involved in an accident, or to inform you they have gone missing if they did not attend form time at school that morning. Therefore, it is essential for the school to have up to date contact details.

Why does school need me to contact them every day if my child is ill?

The school cannot assume your child is at home, they have a safeguarding duty to know where your child is. If your child has been sick the day before, and we don't get a call / message from you to say they will be absent again, we have to assume your child is on their way to school that day. If a child does not arrive at school it could be that they have made their way to school that day but not arrived; therefore neither you nor the school would be aware of their whereabouts.

Why does the school undertake home visits?

Beckfoot Thornton takes the safeguarding of its students very seriously. [The safeguarding of students at Beckfoot Thornton is our priority.](#) Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. Absence from school is a safeguarding matter. Where we have concerns about a child's attendance, or where no valid reason has been provided by parents and we have been unable to contact you, a member of the Attendance Team will conduct a home visit. They may ask to physically see your child. This is because we have a legal duty to ensure that your child is safe. In addition, where a child has been absent for more than 3 days, a member of the Attendance Team may conduct a home visit.

Why am I being asked for medical evidence?

Whilst we do not routinely request medical evidence, we may request it where we have concerns about the attendance of a child or where we are concerned about the authenticity of the reported illness. If we do this, please help us by providing as much information as you can. We may ask for sight of prescriptions, GP appointments, letters from medical professionals if you have them available (but we will not insist you request a letter from your GP). We may decide not to authorise some absences if we are in doubt.

We request that all routine Dr / Dentist / Optician appointments are made out of school hours. Where this is unavoidable, we will ask to see proof of the appointment.

If your child has ongoing health needs, we will follow our Local Authority guidance on this and support you with helping your child access any support they are entitled to. We will ask you to share any medical evidence with us to help us to do this. We will talk to you about an Individual Healthcare Plan if this is needed and discuss any extra support that is needed. It is very helpful if, in this case, you provide

Why do I get letters / email from school regarding attendance levels?

The law and regulations state parents must ensure their child attends school regularly and they are committing an offence if they knowingly fail to do so. The school has a duty to inform you what your child's attendance level is so that you can take action to improve it or discuss barriers to doing so. Your child records their attendance weekly in their planner, so it is easy for you to track this.

What is persistent absence?

The definition of 'persistent absence' is a child who has attended less than 90% for a specific period of time (normally a 6-8 week period); or less than 90% overall at any point during the year. A child who attends for 90% of the year will be absent for one day every 2 weeks. If your child's attendance falls to 90% or below, they may be placed on an attendance contract. If your child's attendance falls below 80%, they will be referred to the Local Authority and you may be prosecuted.

What are Fixed Term Penalty Notices?

Fixed Term Penalty Notices are fines. They are issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absences from school. When issued, you have 21 days to pay the fine at £60 per parent per child being fined for. If you pay it between 21 and 28 days, it goes up to £120 per parent per child. If you fail to pay it within 28 days, the matter is put to the Magistrates Court and the Magistrates will determine the amount of costs and fine you could pay (up to £1000 for a first offence). If you go to court more than once, it could result in a fine of up to £2500, up to 3 months in prison or both.

What are official registration periods?

There is a legal requirement for registers to be taken twice a day. Schools set these within the structure of their day. Beckfoot Thornton closes their AM register at 9am and the PM register at 12.40pm. These registers form the 'official register' and these attendance and absence marks are what is recorded to the Department of Education at each Census Statutory Data Submissions during the year. The whole school attendance level is determined from these registrations and the school is judged by OFSTED on their attendance level.

Under what circumstances could attendance information be shared?

Under statutory safeguarding sharing of information duties, we share information if your child is generally at risk of harm. This can be if your child is absent from school (especially if there are ongoing concerns regarding attendance) and if you have not made contact or school is unable to make contact with you; therefore, your child is presumed missing. Also, if we have information that your child may be involved in crimes outside of school, we will liaise with the community policing teams or your child is potentially at risk of harm.

Statutory attendance information is shared with the local authority on a weekly basis. We share non-specific attendance information with sibling's schools where required (e.g. with partnerships

working to support all children within the family, or to coordinate absence reasons for safeguarding and legal duties). We would share non-sensitive information with other family members if they are recorded as contacts on the child's school records.

Information is also shared with the Local Authority Early Help Team, our Education and Safeguarding Officer and / or Children Social Care if concerns are urgent or if they contact school having received a contact regarding your family, where appropriate to keep your child safe. This is always done with your permission wherever possible unless your child is at immediate risk of harm and gaining permission would put them at further risk.

Can I book a family holiday during term time?

Leaves of Absence will only be granted by the Headteacher if there are exceptional circumstances. Family holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances. If the absence is unauthorised and you continue to take your child out of school for the requested period, you will render yourself liable to receiving a fine from the Local Authority. Our 'request for exceptional leave' forms can be found on the school website, and these should be completed in advance. If you do not make a request and your child is believed to be absent due to non-illness purposes, you would be in breach of the school's attendance procedures. This will also render yourself liable to receiving a fine from the Local Authority.