

# Attendance and Punctuality Protocol

## Aims

Beckfoot Thornton is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all students. For students to gain the best from their time at Beckfoot Thornton, it is vital that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance for all students unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The school actively promotes excellent attendance and discourages unjustified absence. 90% attendance sounds good to some people, but this is half a day missed every week. Over a school year this is 4 weeks – 100 lessons lost!

Promoting excellent attendance and punctuality prepares students for the disciplines of adult working life and is a key priority for the school.

## Guiding principles

- Beckfoot Thornton recognises that parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school every day, (section 444 Education Act 1996).
- The school emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in the school to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Beckfoot Thornton aims to ensure that all its students access an education which meets their needs and allows them to realise their potential.
- The school will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- The school will work with students and their families to ensure every student attends regularly and punctually.
- The school will challenge those students and their parents/carers that give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- The school has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- The school will continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage excellent attendance and learning.
- The school will have regard to the Equality Act and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

## Why is regular attendance so important?

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence seriously affects their learning. Any child's absence can disrupt teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Research has clearly shown that children perform significantly less well in exams and assessments if their attendance has been lower than average.

**Pupils with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs (grades 4+) and 2.8 times as likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs (grades 5+) or equivalent including English and maths, than pupils missing 15-20% of KS4 lessons.**

## Legislation and statutory responsibilities

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves student absence e.g., absence due to sickness, religious observance, funerals);
- Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence e.g. holidays during term time, taking children out without permission i.e. birthdays, parents or siblings attending medical appointments).

Only the school, and not parents / carers, can decide whether or not to authorise an absence even if you send in a note or leave a message. This is written down in the Education Registration Regulations 2006. We will let you know if we are not authorising your child's absence.

Parents are responsible under the Education Act 1996 for ensuring their child's full and regular attendance at the school while they are of compulsory school age. We can ask the Local Authority to take legal action if we have not authorised your child's absences from the school. Legal action can include prosecution, the issue of a fixed penalty notice, or an application of for an Education Supervision Order in the Family Court. If the Local Authority agrees to a prosecution the maximum fine is £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment. We will always offer you opportunities to talk to us and will try to help resolve things without going to court, but we will ask for legal action when this is necessary. Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. In this situation it is essential that the parents do not give in to pressure and allow students to stay away from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. The school works to support parents / carers to ensure that the child returns to school.

## Safeguarding

Beckfoot Thornton is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its students. Each student's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some students may be especially vulnerable. If your child does not attend school regularly, they may be at risk of harm. Safeguarding the interests of each child is the responsibility of everyone and within the context of the school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety and access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

## What you can expect from Beckfoot Thornton

- We will promote excellent attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where student's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support students to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality.

## What Beckfoot Thornton expects from students

- To attend regularly and on time.
- To be punctual to all lessons.
- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are taken to the Attendance or Year Teams.

## What Beckfoot Thornton expects from parents/carers

Parents/carers are asked to:

- Talk to their child about school and education. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Immediately inform the school if their child is unable to attend (by 8.00 am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return, and to confirm in writing on their child's return. Space for parents to write notes is provided in the Student Planner. If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bedtimes, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time.

## Registration

- The law requires the register will be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and in the afternoon session. At Beckfoot Thornton this is at 8.25 am and 12.00pm/12.30pm at the start of period 4.
- Students are expected to arrive on site by 8.20 am in order to be ready for the start of registration at 8.25 am.
- Students are registered at the start of every lesson each day.
- Registers close at 9.00 am in the morning and 12.30/1.00 pm in the afternoon, after which students will be marked unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1).
- Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in 'Keeping Pupil Registers' published by the DfE.

## Punctuality

- The school gates close at 8.20 am. Any student arriving between 8.20am and 8.40am should report to the Attendance Team in the first shelter. They will be given a late stamp and be informed of a 30-minute detention that day. Students arriving after 8.35 am will need to sign in at reception where they will be given a late stamp and informed of a 30 minute detention that day. Parents/carers will be informed of the late detention by the attendance team.
- Records will be kept of students that are late. A third late detention in a week will result in a 60-minute same day detention.
- 6 lates in a term after the register closes (U code) may result in a fine by the Local Authority.

## How we respond to absence/lateness

- We take our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and if a student is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent to explain the absence, the school will contact parents/carers to inform them of their child's absence.
- Year Leaders will contact parents / carers in the first instance. A text will then be sent to parents / carers if no contact has been made.
- Parents/carers are able to respond directly upon receiving this text.
- The attendance team may carry out a home visit to ascertain the reasons for absence and confirm there are no safeguarding issues, and also to reassure students about their return to school.
- All absence notes will be retained.
- Where a student's absence is cause for concern, the school will write to parents/carers and/or invite the parents/carers into school in accordance with our Graduated Attendance Strategy

## Holidays in term time

- School will not authorise a child to take holidays during term time and parents do not have the legal right to take children out of school for holidays.
- The Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2013 removed all reference to "family holidays".
- In April 2017 the Supreme Court upheld the ban on parents taking their children out of school for family holidays during term time. Delivering the verdict, Lady Hale said "Unauthorised absences have a disruptive effect, not only on the education of the individual child but also on the work of other pupils ... If one pupil can be taken out whenever it suits the parent, then so can others ... Any education system expects people to keep to the rules. Not to do so is unfair to those obedient parents who do keep to the rules, whatever the costs or inconvenience to themselves."
- Any absence, including absence for holidays, interrupts the continuity of students' learning and students cannot "catch up". Research shows that by missing lessons, students fall behind as lessons are not repeated at a later date.
- Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take students out of school for holidays during term time as there is no entitlement for them to be taken out of school for such a reason. Any holidays are expected to be taken as part of the 176 days available outside term time.
- At Beckfoot Thornton leaves of absence will only be granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays do not constitute exceptional circumstances and we will ask the Local Authority to issue you with a penalty notice if we do not agree the leave of absence should be authorised.
- Fixed Penalty Notices are £60 per parent per child for the period of absence.
- Parents who wish to apply for a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances must complete a form from the attendance office. This should be handed back to the attendance office at least 3 weeks in advance of the proposed absence.

## Persistent absence

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. This means that students miss ½ a day of school every week. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

Any student whose attendance has reached the PA threshold (less than 90%) or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- working with an attendance mentor

- an attendance contract to improve attendance, following a meeting between relevant School staff and parents/carers
- where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the school, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.
- Persistent Absence data is communicated to the Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

## Medical evidence

Where a student has an ongoing medical condition which is impacting on their attendance at school, it is the parents' responsibility to provide medical evidence. In exceptional circumstances, the school will ask for medical evidence to be provided directly from the GP, with consent of parents/carers.

## Re-integration following long-term absence

Where a student has been absent for a prolonged period of time, perhaps due to illness, the school will:

- Welcome the student back to the school and value their return.
- Provide support for the student in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the school.
- Ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- Work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome.
- Consider a personalised programme of return, if appropriate.
- Nominate a key member of staff to monitor and review the student's return.

## Promoting excellent attendance and punctuality

- It is the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all students.
- Students are informed weekly of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve.
- Students whose attendance falls below 95% will be set targets for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed, as per our Graduated Attendance Strategy.
- Excellent and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded.
- Students, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of excellent attendance.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact Heads of Year or the Attendance Team at any time to discuss their child's attendance.
- Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those students whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Students who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the school.
- Effective links are made with primary schools to facilitate the smooth transition to Beckfoot Thornton.

## Attendance data and targets

- The school target is 100% attendance.
- The target for all students is to strive for 100% attendance. Only by achieving full attendance can students expect to achieve their full potential.

- Attendance data will be collected and analysed and used to inform the school's attendance practices and interventions.
- Individual student data will be analysed and monitored to enable early intervention.
- Attendance data is provided on a half termly basis to the Trust.
- Attendance data and persistent absence data is communicated to the Local Authority.
- Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible to ensure their child receives a suitable education.
- Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at school under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- The school works in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility in ensuring regular school attendance. There are a range of legal interventions used for unauthorised absence i.e., Penalty Fine, Parenting Contracts and Orders, or the matter being placed before the Magistrates' Court with a possible fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.
- All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and to reduce absence.
- Our aim is to avoid legal intervention, wherever possible and we encourage parents to contact us at the earliest opportunity to discuss any attendance concerns.

## **Staff roles and responsibilities**

All members of the school have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

### **The leadership team will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces excellent school attendance. For example, good teaching and learning experiences that encourage students to attend and achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are able to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2016 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Beckfoot Trust.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Ensure that all the above priorities are shared with and reinforced by all relevant school staff.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families.
- Use the standard documents to support a move to legal proceedings should that be necessary.

### **Subject teachers will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Welcome and value the attendance of all students to lessons.

- Ensure all students are accurately registered.
- Identify student absence to lessons and take appropriate action.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Discuss attendance with parents/carers at Parents' Consultation Evenings.

#### **Tutors will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Discuss absence and attendance weekly with students.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Work with identified students, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets.
- Ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are sent to the Attendance Office.
- Discuss attendance with parents/carers at Parents' Consultation Evenings.
- Ensure all unexplained absences are investigated and resolved.

#### **Year leaders will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Monitor absence and attendance daily.
- Discuss absence and attendance concerns with students and set targets for improvement where appropriate.
- Contact parents / carers if no reason for absence is given.
- Contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Support students to improve their attendance.
- Promote excellent attendance through assemblies.
- Work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance for individual students.

#### **Attendance staff will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the school, including improving attendance and reducing absence.
- Monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Receive and record calls and messages from parents/carers regarding student absence.
- Contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Conduct home visits where no reason has been given for absence or where there are other concerns.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate member of staff.
- Support the Local Authority Officer to improve attendance.

#### **Head of departments linked to year groups will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Work with students whose attendance is between 91-92%.

- Monitor attendance over a 4-week period.
- Contact parents / carers to discuss attendance concerns.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate member of staff.

### **Senior leaders linked to year groups will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Place students whose attendance is between 86% and 90% onto an Attendance Contract 1.
- Contact parents / carers to discuss attendance concerns.
- Monitor attendance over a 4-week period.
- Involve external agencies where appropriate.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate member of staff.

### **The Headteacher will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Place students whose attendance is between 81% and 85% onto an Attendance Contract 2.
- Contact parents / carers to discuss attendance concerns.
- Monitor attendance over a 4-week period.
- Involve external agencies where appropriate.
- Identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate member of staff.

### **The Local Authority Officer will:**

- Actively promote the importance and value of excellent attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- The Local Authority Officer will work with students whose attendance has fallen below 80% (although they will work with other students where appropriate).
- Parents will be invited to a panel meeting with the Local Authority Officer and students will be placed onto an attendance contract.
- Where attendance does not significantly improve, legal action will be considered.
- Legal action can include prosecution, the issue of a fixed penalty notice, or an application of for an Education Supervision Order in the Family Court. If the Local Authority agrees to a prosecution the maximum fine is £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment.



## Appendix 1 – DFE’S Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings

Code	Description	Meaning	For statistical purposes
/	Present (AM)	Present	
\	Present (PM)	Present	
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Education activity	Counted as physically present
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate)	Authorised absence	
D	Dual registration (i.e., pupil attending another establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances	
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence	
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence	
J	Interview	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	
M	Medical/dental appointments	Authorised absence	
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence	
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
W	Work experience	Approved education activity	Counted as physically present
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances	

Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances	
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances	
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances	