

# Pupil Attendance

The following is an extract from the school's Attendance Policy. The full policy can be found on the school website. Throughout this policy, 'parent' refers to a child's parent or adult with legal guardianship or parental responsibility.

## 1. Introduction

At Belmont we are committed to working with parents to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Our aim is for children to feel happy and secure in school and achieve their full potential. This is difficult to achieve if they are frequently absent from, or late for school. Children with poor attendance and punctuality not only miss doing their academic work but also miss out on the social side of school life, which can affect their ability to make and keep friendships. Consequently, we work hard to ensure that any problems with children's attendance are identified and followed up quickly; and that solutions are explored with parents at an early stage. We work closely with the Local Authority and families are referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer, if problems persist.

Belmont is proud of its high level of attendance which is above the average for similar schools nationally. Whole school attendance is consistently above 96% and the school expects this as a target for individual pupils. **Nationally, attendance lower than 90% is classed and recorded as 'persistent absence'. Please be aware that attendance of 90% is the equivalent of one half day's absence every single week. If a child's attendance is 85% this is equivalent to missing half a term of school over the year!**

**The school's policy is written in line with the London Borough of Hounslow's advice and procedures.**

## 2. The Legal Framework

Parents are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education. They are responsible for ensuring that their children attend during the specified school hours and stay unless alternative arrangements for their education are made. It is also a parent's responsibility to inform the school of any absence.

Belmont Primary School is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the Local Authority. The London Borough of Hounslow employs Education Welfare Officers to monitor school attendance and punctuality and advise parents how to meet their responsibility.

Under existing legislation, parents commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as **unauthorised** (absences without a valid reason).

**Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence.**

## 3. Absence

### **3.1 Authorised Absence**

The head teacher will only authorise absence from school for reasons she believes to be unavoidable and/or exceptional. (NB Absence for educational reasons e.g. secondary school open days or alternative provision is recorded as such and counts as attendance.)

Acceptable reasons include:

- Child's illness, medical or dental appointments
- Family bereavement
- Days of religious observance (up to two in any academic year)
- Other circumstances which the Head Teacher believes to be reasonable e.g. attendance at family court

Such absences will usually be authorised, provided that parents notify the school in good time.

### 3.2 Unauthorised Absence

The Head Teacher will not authorise absence from school for reasons she believes to be avoidable e.g. family holidays during term time. Children may be removed from the school roll if parents take extended leave for family holidays or other unacceptable reasons.

Absences not normally authorised include:

- Holidays during term time
- Weddings requiring travel abroad during term time
- Visits to relatives
- Relocation to foreign country visits during term time
- Lateness where no adequate explanation is provided
- Absences which the Head Teacher believes to be non-essential or where no reason is provided.

**Periods of unauthorised leave of absence are reported to the Local Authority who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to parents.**

### 3.3 Notifying the School of Reasons for Absence

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of any absence. They should state the nature of the absence and when the child is expected to return to school. Parents cannot demand that their children be granted authorised leave of absence from school, but they can apply to the head teacher who has the power to grant requests in exceptional circumstances.

<b>Illness</b>	Parents should telephone the school during the first day of absence and send a note, explaining the reason for the absence, to the child's teacher on return to school. The school must be contacted by telephone if the absence is expected to exceed a week. Medical evidence may be required to authorise long term illness or periods of illness when a child's attendance has fallen below 91%.
<b>Medical/Dental Appointments</b>	Please arrange these outside school hours, if possible. If appointments can only be arranged in the school day, parents should send a note or telephone the school and inform the school office what time the child will return to school and if a school dinner is required. Please give the Office a copy of the appointment card/letter when provided.
<b>Family Bereavement</b>	The school should be notified of the absence, either by telephone or letter, at the earliest opportunity.
<b>Religious Observance</b>	The school should be notified by letter <u>before</u> the absence occurs. Please note that only two days (four half day sessions) will be authorised per academic year.
<b>Other Circumstances</b>	Parents should write to the Head Teacher requesting leave of absence, or complete a form available from the School Office, explaining the circumstances, <u>before</u> the absence occurs. <b>Term time leave can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.</b> Parents may be required to provide evidence to support their application. If an absence arises as a result of unforeseen circumstances, parents should inform the School at the earliest opportunity.
<b>Unavoidable Lateness</b>	Parents should write a note in the late book on arrival at school, or send a note, if the child comes to school with another carer. They should ring in advance if a school dinner is required, as these are ordered first thing in the morning.

### 4. Punctuality

Being on time to school is vital; arriving late is disruptive for your child, the teacher and other children in the class. **The school day starts at 8.55 a.m. for all children in Reception to Year 6.** Nursery sessions start at either 8.45 or 9.00 a.m. (dependent upon the child's group). If children are late for school, they should be brought to the **main school entrance**, and their name recorded by the parent on the electronic system, with the reason for lateness. This record is important as it enables the school to have a full record of attendance should there be a need for emergency evacuation.