



**Branscombe CE Primary School, Broadhembury CE Primary School and Farway CE Primary School**

**Attendance, Punctuality and Truancy Policy**

<b>Responsible for review</b>	
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<b>Due for review: Summer</b>	<b>Approved by Governing body on</b>	<b>Head teacher signature</b>	<b>Chair of Governors signature</b>
<b>2015</b>			
<b>2016</b>			
<b>2017</b>			

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full time education, through regular and structured attendance. We, at The Jubilee Federation, emphasise this to parents. Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children attend school regularly and on time. Our policy is always to encourage and support very good attendance.

It is the policy of The Jubilee Federation to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our schools will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our schools will give high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. However, children should not attend school if they are unwell.



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**Aims**

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the federation.
- To develop positive attitudes to learning and attainment therefore encouraging children to want to come to school.
- To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents and pupils.
- To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities.
- To provide support and guidance for parents and pupils.
- To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information.
- To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence.
- To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and other agencies
- To use outside agencies as appropriate, to the best effect.

**Statutory Duty of Schools**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

**Principles**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly. We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance.



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#### **Communication**

Information on punctuality, unauthorised absence and illness is regularly sent home in the school newsletters. An emphasis is placed on the importance of being at school on time and notifying Branscombe Primary School / Broadhembury Primary School / Farway Primary School if a child is absent for any reason. Good attendance is also included within the Home / School agreement that each parent signs when starting at one of the schools.

The DCSF booklet 'Is your child missing out?' is available in the school entrance area. This has useful general information, **however, it should be noted that this has not been updated since the changes relating to holidays in September 2013.**

The importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained at the Pre-school Induction Meetings held in the Summer Term each year for children about to enter Reception Class. This reiterates that parents and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children, particularly, should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own. Parents are asked to share any worries that their child might have in school. Parents need to be aware that even little things can upset children, which means that they might become unhappy and might not want to come to school. All parents are asked to sign a copy of the home-school agreement at this meeting.

At Induction Meetings, parents are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time.

#### **Holidays in term time**

As from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, **all schools are unable to authorise requests for absence relating to holidays in term time.** This has been brought about by an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 which has removed reference to holidays and the ten day period.

The government's view is that every minute of school day is vital and pupils should only be granted authorised absence by the school in **exceptional** circumstances e.g. illness, exclusions, or due to other **unavoidable** causes.

Unauthorised absences may well result in the instigation of parental responsibility measures which could be a penalty notice, or a fine of up to £2,500 and / or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.



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Parents are regularly reminded in the weekly newsletter that they should not take their children out of school unnecessarily for holidays or visits.

Within The Jubilee Federation, if parents wish to request an absence they will need to speak to Mrs Gray. They will then be asked to complete a Request for Leave of Absence form. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides and must be for an exceptional circumstance (some guidance about the type of absences that are considered exceptional are on the reverse of the request form).

The Head Teacher is responsible for approving absence from school.

Local schools, following consultation with the EWO, has adopted these common principles in relation to considering absence requests for exceptional circumstances.

1. Absences will not be sanctioned in the first two weeks of a new term. (These times are important for strengthening friendships groups and introducing new learning within the curriculum)
2. Absences will not be sanctioned during the month of May as this is the school's assessment period. (The data from this time is essential for us to plan learning objectives that meet individual needs)
3. Generally, absences will not be sanctioned if overall attendance stands at less than 95%
4. Generally, only one period of absence will be approved in each academic year.

Term Dates are available from the school office or on the website.

If the Head Teacher does not sanction an absence, any absence by the pupil will be treated as unauthorised. Reasons for authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents.

### **Registration**

The Register is completed in the morning and afternoon at the first period of the session. A pupil will receive a late mark if he/she arrives after the Register has been called. All pupils who are late must be brought to the Reception area by their parent(s)/guardian(s) who will sign the late book, giving the reason for being late.

Government regulations require that the School records the reason for every absence and distinguishes between authorised and unauthorised absence. Staff are regularly reminded in staff meetings of their role within the registration process and how to ensure registers comply with legal requirements.



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Each absence has to be classed as authorised or not authorised and The Jubilee Federation asks that parents notify them as soon as possible with the reason for absence. It is the parents' responsibility to inform school of the reason for absence by telephone on the first day of absence. If we have not received notice a member of staff will need to telephone to enquire. This also provides some security for children on their journey to school. When a child returns to school after an absence, a written note is required to comply with Government regulations. An easy to use form for this purpose is available in the school entrance hall/office and on the website. If no written explanation of the absence is received the parents will be asked by letter to explain the absence. Parents of children with high levels of medical absence may be asked to provide a doctor's note to confirm the reason for any future absences.

The School Administrator is responsible for collating Attendance Records in school and notifies the Head Teacher if there is any reason for concern. The Head Teacher contacts the parents if lateness or lack of attendance persist. At the end of the year, each child's attendance is analysed and a copy is given to parents with their child's School Report. The Sims 'Attendance' software is used for this purpose.

#### **Concerns**

The Attendance Registers and Data kept on the main Administrative Computer, are examined regularly. If there is a frequent pattern of absence from the school, the Head Teacher will telephone the parents to ascertain the reason for persistent absence. The Headteacher examines the data and makes a decision whether to pursue the matter further on a case by case basis. If there are concerns about a child's non-attendance or non-punctuality, the class teacher consults the Head Teacher immediately. Details of attendance or percentages of late arrivals to school are extracted from the computer database. The Head Teacher shows this to the parent(s) during an informal discussion. If absences or non-punctuality persist, the Head Teacher contacts the Education Welfare Officer.

If the situation needs discussing before a home visit, the Head Teacher should telephone or fill in the EWS 1 form, which indicates the patterns. The Head Teacher monitors attendances/absences as part of the school's ongoing analysis of pupil data.

#### **Truancy**

All staff within The Jubilee Federation believe in the importance of continuity in every child's learning. Staff are also concerned about each child's safety, health, welfare and happiness.

Although truancy is very rare at the Schools, if staff are suspicious that a child might be playing truant, action is taken immediately. If truancy is suspected, the Head Teacher and the Educational Welfare Officer are notified. Parents are contacted, either by telephone or a home visit. We encourage parents to bring their child to school, so that the reasons for truancy can be discussed and, we hope, resolved. If the Head Teacher is unable to talk to



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the parent(s), she talks to the child to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If problems are identified, these are discussed and resolved with the class teacher, other members of staff who come into contact with the child and, where appropriate with other pupils.

Within The Jubilee Federation, we endeavour to discover, through discussion with the individual pupils, classes and the School Council, what the children like and dislike about school. The staff consider the children's opinions and, if possible, adjustments are made to teaching and learning procedures and the school environment.

#### **Attendance Targets**

The Governing Body has a duty to set attendance targets each year, to reduce the overall absence rates (i.e. authorised and unauthorised absences combined). These targets are submitted to the Local Authority. The annual target is based on the total absences expected in the school year, expressed as a percentage of the total possible attendances by pupils at the school. These are set in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service.

#### **Support for Children**

Within The Jubilee Federation we will:

- Ensure that the school anti bullying and behaviour policies are up to date and effective
- Use SEAL to support our work
- Refer children to the school nurse where illness leads to chronic non attendance
- Ensure that the curriculum supports Being Healthy
- Create safe and quiet places around the school
- Keep pupils on site at lunchtime

#### **Ideas for Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**

##### **Assemblies**

- Individual Assemblies on everyday matters relate to attendance, such as time-keeping, excuses, illness, and what Branscombe / Broadhembury / Farway Primary School can and cannot change.

##### **Class Organisation/Lessons**

- Worksheets on attendance; time-keeping monitoring sheets.
- Lessons on telling the time.
- Word searches; attendance quiz.
- Children may design posters for attendance and punctuality to be displayed around the school.
- Writing letters.
- Class/School Council discussions on feelings, likes and dislikes about school.



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- PSHE and Citizenship lessons may explore attendance.
- Questionnaires to pupils and parents.
- Peer group support – contacting friends who are absent.
- Positive support for those pupils who have been absent for a significant period – planned reintegration. Use of Return to School teachers.

**Rewards**

- Special Headteacher Award Certificates may be presented to children with high attendance over the academic year





## Is your child missing out?

School Attendance: Information for Parents

Revised Edition 2007





## 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 or alternative provision 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.

Some parents may be trying but finding it hard to get their children to attend school.

Research has shown that children who are not in school are most vulnerable and are easily drawn into crime. Those children who play truant are more likely to offend than those that do not. Research also shows that less than 40% of pupils in secondary schools with an average of 17 days or more absence get 5 good GCSEs (grades A\* to C) compared to more than 90% in schools with an average of

less than 8 days absence. In primary schools less than 65% get good results in Maths and English in schools with an average of 15 days absence compared to around 90% in schools where the average is less than 8 days. Many parents are surprised how quickly their children accumulate 15 days absence. Every lesson in school matters and children who have time off find it difficult to catch up.

## What does the law say?

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) 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 about authorised absences?

Of course there may be times when your child has to miss school because she or he is ill. This is to be expected and for the odd day off sick you should follow the school's procedures for notifying illness.

Children may also have to attend a medical or dental appointment in school time. However, you should try to make routine appointments

such as dental check-ups during the school holidays or after school hours.

Any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible. Absences can only be authorised by the school.

If you think you might need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with the school as soon as possible. Reasons such as family bereavement or taking part in an agreed religious observance would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school include shopping and birthdays.

### What about holidays in term time?

You should not expect your child's school to agree to an absence for a holiday in term time. Taking a holiday during term time means that children miss important school time - both educationally and for other school activities. It will be difficult for them to catch up on work later on.

Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday. The law says that schools have the discretion to grant up to ten days authorised absence in a school year if:

- the parent the child normally lives with applies in advance of the holiday; and
- there are special reasons for the holiday.

Each application is considered individually by the school, taking into account factors like the timing of the holiday and the child's attendance record. Schools will only consider requests for more than 10 days leave a year in exceptional circumstances. If you need to take your child out of school during term time:

- you should request the time off for your

child as soon as possible and always before the holiday;

- never ask for time off during exam or test periods unless for exceptional circumstances;
- do not book travel for holidays in term time, until you have sought the school's permission; and
- remember that the school might not agree to authorise the time off.

### What happens if my child does not attend school regularly?

Your child's school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the LA. Most LAs employ Education Welfare Officers (also called Education Social Workers) to monitor school attendance and to help parents meet their responsibility.

If your child is not attending school regularly, an Education Welfare Officer may visit or write to you. Education Welfare Officers work with parents to address their child's attendance difficulties. You may be offered a parenting contract by your child's school or LA. This is a formal agreement in which the school and/or LA agree to provide you with support and you agree to do certain things to help improve your child's attendance. In some areas other workers such as Learning Mentors or Connexions Personal Advisers based in the school may also be working with children on their attendance.

As a parent, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice or being taken to court.

The LA may decide to prosecute a parent. If this happens:

- Parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually a parenting class.

A penalty notice of £50 may be issued (by the LA, school or police) as an alternative to prosecution. This rises to £100 if unpaid after 28 days. Failure to pay will normally lead to prosecution.

The LA may apply for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) instead of or as well as prosecuting parents. This would be heard in the Family Proceedings Court. An ESO is made in respect of a child and makes the LA responsible for advising, supporting and giving directions to a child and his or her parents in order to make sure that the child attends school regularly. There are sanctions against parents who fail to cooperate. Magistrates may also direct the LA to consider applying for an ESO following a prosecution.

### At what age must children begin their education?

Children reach compulsory school age on the first of the following days which is on or after their fifth birthday:

- 31 August
- 31 December; or
- 31 March.

But it is important for your children to get into good habits of attending regularly and arriving on time if they start Nursery or school earlier.

### At what age can children leave school?

By law, compulsory education for all children in England ends on the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child reaches 16.

Your child cannot leave school until that date. Even if they have received their National Insurance card before then, it is still against the law for them to leave school and begin full-time work.

### 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 school or the LA Education Welfare Service 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 school.
- If your child is ill or absent for any other reason, contact the school on the first day of absence.
- 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 afternoon sessions.
- Take an interest in your child's education. Ask them about their day and praise and encourage their achievements at school.
- Co-operate with any support, such as a parenting contract offered by the school or LA.

## Where can I get more information?

Start with your school, or the LA Education Welfare Service.

Other useful sources of information are listed below.

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)  
Independent, practical and legal advice on schooling issues.

General helpline:

0808 8005793 (2 - 5 pm weekdays)

Exclusions information: 0808 8000327

Website includes advice booklets that can be downloaded, includes information on bullying and special educational needs:  
[www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

ChildLine

A free confidential helpline for children.

Tel: 0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Parentline Plus

A free 24-hour confidential helpline for parents.

Tel: 0808 800 2222

A free text phone for people with a speech or hearing impairment: 0800 783 6783

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

Information leaflets

Courses and workshops

[www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance)

Information on all aspects of school attendance including links to relevant legislation.

[www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying)

Information and advice on tackling bullying.

[www.parentscentre.gov.uk](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk)

Information and support for parents on how to help with your child's learning.

You can download this publication or order copies online at:  
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## ABSENCE REQUEST FORM (exceptional circumstances only)

To: The Principal / HeadTeacher of .....

I wish to apply to have an 'avoidable' absence authorised, for:

Child's name ..... Class/Year .....

Child's name ..... Class/Year .....

Date from ..... date to .....(inclusive)

Name of Parent(s)/Carer(s): .....

Address: .....

**Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed.**

Signature of Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Office use only			<input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised Code ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised Signed _____ Headteacher
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	% Attendance	



### This portion to be returned to parents/carers

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable,

Pupil(s) name(s) .....

Class/Year .....

☐ Absence authorised from ..... to ..... (Inclusive)

☐ Absence unauthorised current attendance ..... % as of ...../...../20.....

Signed .....(HeadTeacher)

Date .....

### NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission **must** be sought in **advance**. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactory up to the date covered by this request.

**Warning:** If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

## AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME

**IMPORTANT:** Please read carefully the information below.

**WARNING:** If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice\* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>School aged pupils in Devon maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc), the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and you may receive a £60* fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>

<p><b>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Genuine illness</li> <li>▪ Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)</li> <li>▪ Days of religious observance</li> <li>▪ Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>▪ External examinations</li> <li>▪ When Traveller children go on the road with their parents</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other examples of absence from school that will not be authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Any type of shopping</li> <li>▪ Looking after siblings or unwell parents</li> <li>▪ Minding the house</li> <li>▪ Birthdays</li> <li>▪ Resting after a late night</li> <li>▪ Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li> </ul>
<p>Please contact your child's head teacher if you wish to discuss this issue.</p> <p><b>The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.</b></p> <p>We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.</p>	

\*Penalty Notice £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days