Attendance Policy

Brighton & Hove Montessori School

Approved by:	Gerry Oliver and Niki Rowe	**Date:** October 2019
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At Brighton & Hove Montessori School we believe that children should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation, behaviour, socialisation and attainment of children. Absence from School affects the pattern of a child's sense of being part of their community and regular absence and / or regular late drop-off may affect their learning. Government regulations are that all schools promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, and to act early to address patterns of absence. Parents and carers are expected to ensure their children of compulsory school age (over 5 years old) who are registered at school attend regularly and are on time to give every child the best educational experience possible

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school community and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance – we will use meetings, newsletters and our school website to get all families on board with our school's expectation for high attendance from the outset. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled - It is important that children feel part of a meaningful community. Therefore, we encourage parents and carers of children who are not yet compulsory school age, to enable their children to fully attend core sessions on regular days.
- Addressing patterns of absence by contacting the parents/carers to discuss the matter
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure children have the support in place to attend school as needed. The school will inform parents and carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via annual reports.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Monitoring and regularly reviewing and challenging attendance figures
- Holding the Head of School to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Meeting with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families

In the Head of School's absence the above responsibilities fall to the School Manager.

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with children and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Gerry Oliver and can be contacted via 01273 702485 and info@brighton-montessori.org.uk

3.4 Lead teachers

- Lead teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.30am on the same day.
- It may be appropriate for lead teachers to meet with parents/carers in the first instance to discuss emerging patterns of attendance issues

3.5 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls and emails from parents/care about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system, forwarding emails to the lead teacher as appropriate
- Monitor and analyse attendance data (see section 7)
- Arrange calls and meetings between parents/carers to discuss attendance issues with the School Manager

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Call or email the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.7 Children

Children are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We keep an attendance register, and place all children onto this register.

We take our attendance register at the start of each school day and once during the second session. It marks whether every child is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We also record:

- For children of compulsory school age (over 5), whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a child is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a child is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Doors open at 8.45am and Children are expected to arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00am and will be kept open until 09:30am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12.15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Regulations require that parents and carers notify the school of the reason for their child's absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by emailing or phoning the school office staff (see also section 7).

Office staff will forward any messages to the Lead Teacher. It is the Lead Teacher's responsibility to record the reason for absence in the register and save messages to the child's file.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the child's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment by emailing or phoning the office

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The child's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

It is important that children arrive on time for school to support their feeling of security at school and facilitate the smooth running of the day. Lateness can cause disruption to other children who have already started their day, as well as teachers supporting the working environments.

A child who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed at 9.30am will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Regulations include that as part of our safeguarding duty the school notify the Local Authority's education service of frequent late arrivals of a child.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, every effort will be made to establish the reason for absence and carry out reasonable enquiries about the child's whereabouts. Whenever a child fails to attend school, prompt action needs to be taken to ensure the child's safety and enable them to return to school as soon as possible. On day 1 the School will contact parents to establish the reason for the absence and when the child is likely to return to school. If no acceptable reason is offered by the parents, this will be deemed as unauthorised absence. If it is not possible to contact the parents/carers or the School is not reassured that the child is safe and well and at home, it may be necessary to take specific steps to safeguard the child. The situation must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who may then contact the police.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Leave of absence authorised by the school: Once children are of statutory school age (5 years) holidays should not be taken during term time. If a holiday is unavoidable, in order to comply with DfE government regulations, we ask that parents and carers request absence in writing from the School Manager. We appreciate that this is not a requirement for children under 5 years old, but it is still helpful for us to know about absences in advance to allow teachers to plan their lessons accordingly.

Illness: Parents/carers should notify the School via telephone or email on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness and advise when the child is likely to return to school. The School will only record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. When a child suffers from a long-term condition, certification should be provided by the responsible specialist.

Medical or dental appointments: Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. The School, however, encourages parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Religious observance: The School will treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance.

Reason for absence not yet provided: The School should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. If no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, the absence will become an absence from school without authorisation.

Absent from school without authorisation: If parents/carers do not apply for leave of absence in advance or if the School is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence, we will need to record it as unauthorized as per DfE government regulations. If attendance does not improve the School Manager/DSL will contact the parents/carers. The School has to inform the Local Authority's education service of any child who is regularly absent from school, has irregular attendance, or has missed 10 school days or more without the school's permission.

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances: the school building, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the child from attending school; or a government or local authority mandate on closing of schools.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor children's attendance and absence
- Identify whether or not there are particular children whose absences may be a cause for concern

6.2 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of children who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by office staff. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day