



CATALYST

Benyon Primary

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Dear Parents/Carers,

School Attendance

We are writing this special letter to you about attendance to provide you with a clear outline about absence procedures and the School and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance.

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unacceptable Reasons

The following reasons are not acceptable:

- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- birthdays
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- Parental/sibling illness/appointments

Illness and First Day Call

All absences must be notified to the school as soon as possible by telephone **before 9am** on the first day of absence. We require you to let us know the exact symptoms of the illness and reason for absence. If more information about the illness is required, the school will call parents/carers directly.

If the school has not been advised of a pupil's absence by the time the register closes, then a first day call will be made to parents/carers. When contact cannot be made, a home visit will be made to determine the location of the pupil.

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If the child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, cold or stomach ache etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in, if they don't get any better, school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. **The NHS has produced a guidance to support parents in their decision making: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)**



All efforts should be made for parents to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours, if possible. If pupils have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, during the school day, parents should let the school know and are required to provide evidence in the form of an appointment card or letter for the school's records. Pupils should be brought into school prior to the appointment and return to school after appointments.

Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support.

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents come first to the office before collecting children. Please bring your child to the office on returning from the appointment. Please indicate in advance whether s/he will be returning for the school meal, which will need to be booked on Arbor in advance. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences and evidence is required.

Lateness

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration; this is done, in class, at 8.55am each day.

Please see below for details reporting punctuality, as explained in our school attendance policy:

- School gates open at 8:40am when children are expected to come to their classrooms for registration.
- If children arrive after 8.55am they must go directly to the school office to ensure that an attendance mark is recorded.
- An 'L' mark is recorded in the register if the pupil arrives between **8.55am and 9.00am**.
A 'U' mark is recorded in the register, if the pupil arrives **after 9.00am**, resulting in an unauthorised absence, despite being present.

Late arrival after the official 'close' of the register will result in your child receiving an unauthorised mark. These unauthorised marks affect a child's overall attendance and, as outlined in our attendance policy, once attendance falls below our 96% benchmark we follow the three stages of our attendance procedure.

Leave of Absence:

Holidays

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time.

Where unauthorised leave is taken, the Governing Body has decided that it will support the imposition of a fixed penalty fine.

What is considered as poor attendance?

At Catalyst Academies Trust, our attendance target is 96% with the school actively promoting and encouraging 100% attendance for all of our pupils.

Pupils with attendance below 90% are defined by the DfE as a persistent absentee.



At the end of each half term we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% and issue a courtesy letter or make telephone call informing parents. We then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing.

We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding about the School's expectations in this matter.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs S Oxley
Headteacher

