

Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School



Attendance Policy

Document History Log:

Author of document:	Amy Goodwin	Job role:	Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead
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Task	Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Signatories
First document review	September 2025	Amy Goodwin & Karl Barron	 K. Barron
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3 rd Review			
4 th Review			

Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Amy Goodwin	Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead	Cheveleypark@durhamlearning.net
Karl Barron	Headteacher's PA & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Cheveleypark@durhamlearning.net
Janet Johnstone	Office Manager	Cheveleypark@durhamlearning.net
Claire Gartside	Administration Assistant	Cheveleypark@durhamlearning.net

Our parents and carers understand that it is their duty to inform Mrs Johnstone, Mr Barron or Mrs Gartside in the school office (01913869494) by 9:15 a.m. if their child is going to be absent that day.

Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve

other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Children Missing from Education

If pupils' whereabouts are not known following enquiries, schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treated as a safeguarding issue.

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the [Working Together to improve school attendance statutory](#) guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school day

The school day is from 8:55 AM until 3:30 PM.

Children arrive at school through their year group fire doors from the yard – apart from Year 2, EMP1 & EMP2 who enter through the Key Stage 1 cloakroom door.

Registration is between 8:45 AM and 8:55 AM. The register will close at 8:55 AM. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended).

Registration time is at 8:55 AM and 1.00 PM for all children at which point the pupil entrance points will be locked and all pupils arriving after these times must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 20 minutes after this time (on a morning) then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). In line with government guidance, registers will be closed at this point (9:15 AM), and any children arriving more than 20 minutes late will be recorded as (U), which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued).

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact the school office if there are any issues which are affecting a pupils ability to attend school on time.

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (Arbor) and CPOMS.

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions

Throughout each half term, attendance and punctuality is monitored and where there are concerns, Mrs Goodwin will contact parents to offer support. Following this where punctuality does not improve, a letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Head will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way improve this. Incentives to improve punctuality may also be offered to pupils.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with Head Teacher or relevant member of staff for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality. A referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

Term dates and planned Inset days

Our school term dates and Inset days can be found on our school website at <https://www.belmontcheveleypark.durham.sch.uk/page/?title=Term+Dates&pid=55>

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in [regulation 11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission should be requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with completing a Leave of Absence Request Form – which can be collected from the school office or accessed by clicking on the following link:

<https://www.belmontcheveleypark.durham.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=119&type=doc>

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

On the first day of absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the school office on 0191 386 9494 giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

Periods of extended absence

During any period of absence, it can be expected that there will be daily contact between the school and parents and in the event that an absence extends to 5 days, it is likely that relevant school staff will carry out a home visit.

No reason for absence provided

If we do not receive contact from home, all emergency contacts on the child's file will be contacted – and if no response from anyone is received, this will be escalated as a welfare/safeguarding concerns - and a welfare call will be logged with the police or a home visit will be carried out by 2 members of staff.

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10 school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the local authority.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parents provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

Our school promotes and incentivises good attendance by (but not limited to):

- Submitting a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools
- Building strong relationships and working jointly with families
- Giving parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters, website, letters home
- Promoting the benefits of high attendance to pupils
- Accurately completing admission and attendance registers and having effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absences
- Reward good or improving attendance

Attendance data

We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to parents, staff and other professionals such as early help, TAF, TAS etc.

Absence concerns

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

Persistent absence

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent.

Supportive measures will always be put in place to improve attendance for all children. School intends to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help, or whole family plan, where there are wider issues affecting attendance. Each case will be on an individual basis where personalised support will be put in place to review progress against the agreed targets.

Formal support may be put in place in certain circumstances. Formal support may include a written agreement or written support plan, agreed with the attendance team.

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you talk to the school or attendance team about the issues as soon as possible. You may need to attend a

meeting in school to talk about the problems and to put a plan in place. Sometimes, school may need to involve other services to help.

The school will always try to communicate with you regarding your child's attendance if it declines. This communication may involve explaining that attendance is a cause for concern by letter, making telephone calls to you and inviting you to attend a meeting in school – depending on the circumstance. The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve the situation.

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent.

School will work with pupils, parents and partner services and agencies to provide additional support through a more formal, planned approach in conjunction with the local authority to prevent severe absence (persistently absent pupils 70% or below) – review Attendance Support Meeting involving the School Attendance Champion.

National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#))

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet](#))

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence.

If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

Pupils with specific needs

As a school we treat each case individually: understanding the different barriers to attendance. We aim to account for the specific needs of pupils/pupil cohorts, to apply support fairly and consistently while considering the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of the policy, we have considered obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to ensure the fair treatment of all our children, parents and carers.

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This policy is supported by our policies on:

Safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, inclusive learning etc.

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



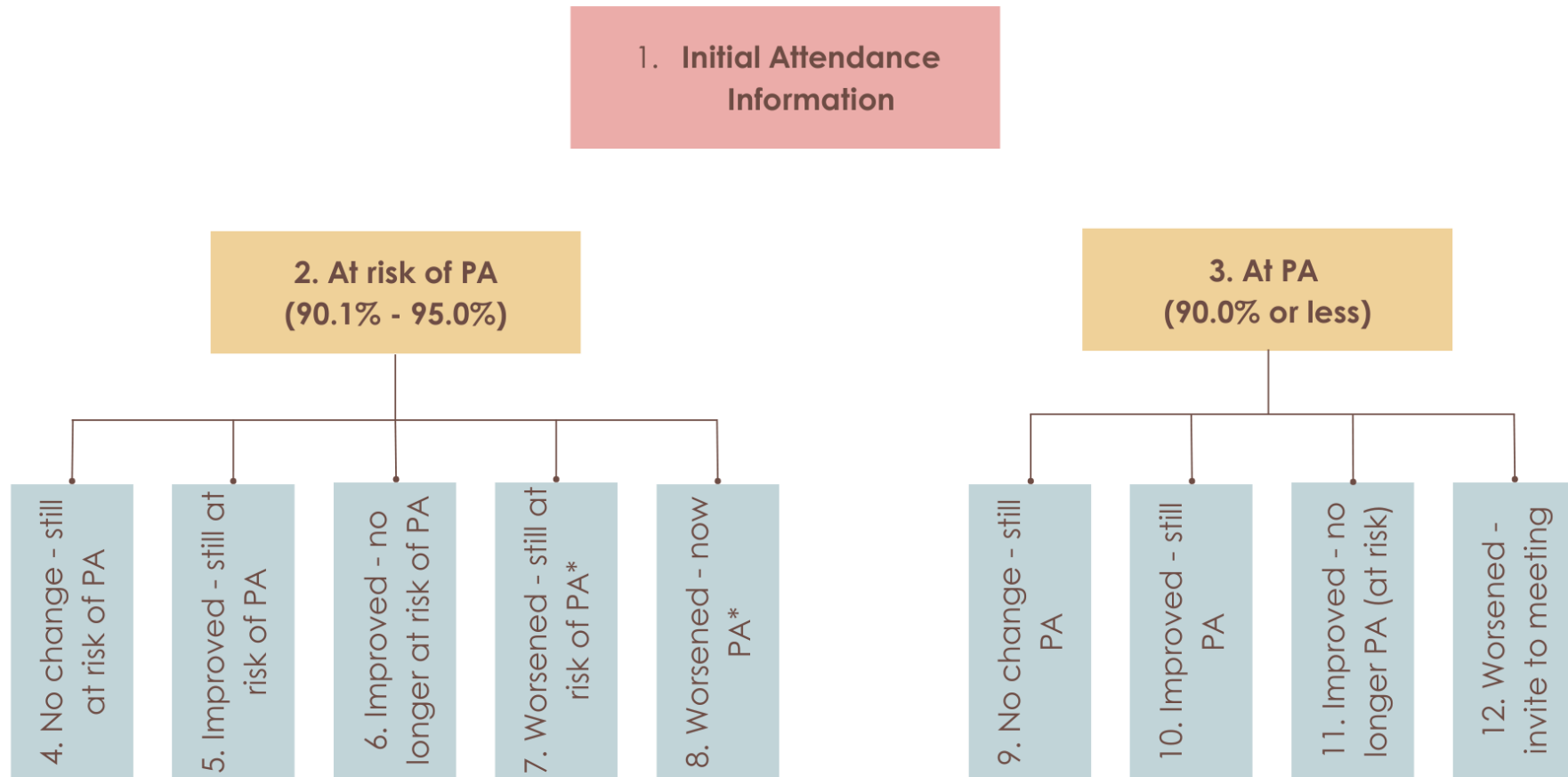
ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.



Belmont Cheveley Park Primary School

Attendance Intervention Flowchart



* consider the need for letter 12

Cheveley Park Primary School – Attendance and Lateness Overview

To be read in conjunction with our Attendance Policy

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. At Cheveley Park, we aim to:

- ❖ Set the standard that expected attendance for all pupils is **at least 97%** (this equates to a child being absent for 6 days within the academic year)
- ❖ Ensure our parents and carers recognise that they have a legal duty to guarantee their child attends school regularly and on time
- ❖ Strictly adhere to our school day timings which are as follows:
 - No children are on the yard unsupervised by a parent/carer before 8:45 a.m.
 - The initial bell rings at 8:45 a.m.
 - Entry into school is a flexible 10-minute window
 - The second bell rings at 8:55 a.m. and this is when the school day starts. Classroom doors will be closed at this point
 - Any child arriving after 8:55 a.m., but before 9:15 a.m., will be recorded as late on the register
 - Any child arriving after 9:15 a.m. will be recorded as an unauthorised absence on the register
 - All children arriving late will enter school through the main entrance
- ❖ Ensure that our parents and carers understand that it is their legal duty to inform Mrs Johnstone, Mr Barron or Mrs Gartside in the school office (01913869494) by 9:15 a.m. if their child is going to be absent that day
- ❖ Have all children accounted for by 9:30 a.m. Office staff will carry out the following if they have not been informed of a child being absent:
 - Call all emergency contacts in priority order and if there has been no answer, a welfare call will be carried out by school staff (usually Mrs Goodwin and Mr Barron) and/or logged with the police
- ❖ Where a child has been absent for 5 continuous days (and this is not due to a known holiday in term time), staff will carry out a home welfare call. This will happen even if parents have kept in touch with the school regularly throughout this time – this is simply to check the child is safe and offer support where needed
- ❖ Discourage holidays being taken in term time
- ❖ Monitor attendance, lateness and minutes lost half-termly and contact parents and carers to offer support where necessary
- ❖ Tackle persistent absenteeism (PA): The DfE deems a student to be known as a PA, if their attendance drops below 90% - regardless of the reason for the absence
- ❖ Work alongside our local authority colleagues and parents and carers to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children
- ❖ Follow legal, Local Authority and Department for Education procedures, and issue fixed penalty notices where necessary

Our main aim is to be an effective school which consistently promotes the benefits of good attendance at school, sets high expectations for every pupil, communicates those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, and systematically analyses our data to identify patterns to target our improvement efforts, and work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance. We recognise that attendance cannot be seen in isolation and that the foundation of good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive.

Mrs Goodwin is our Lead Officer for attendance in school.

EACH ACADEMIC YEAR CONSISTS OF 190 SCHOOL DAYS - WHICH MEANS THERE ARE 175 NON SCHOOL DAYS TO SPEND ON FAMILY TIME, VISITS, HOLIDAYS, SHOPPING, HOUSEHOLD JOBS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

PARENTS AND CARERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF ALL MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS THEIR CHILD ATTENDS WITHIN SCHOOL TIME (THIS MAY BE IN THE FORM OF A LETTER FROM THE HOSPITAL, MEDICAL APPOINTMENT CARDS, SCREENSHOTS OF APPOINTMENT SENT VIA TEXT/EMAIL ETC.) OTHERWISE, SESSIONS MISSED TO ATTEND APPOINTMENTS, WILL BE CLASSED AS AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.



Days off school add up to lost learning!



190 SCHOOL DAYS EACH ACADEMIC YEAR...						
...which means there are 175 NON school days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments						
↑ 365 DAYS IN EACH YEAR ↓	190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR	6 DAYS ABSENCE 184 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR	19 DAYS ABSENCE 171 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR	Half a Term missed 29 DAYS ABSENCE 161 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR	38 DAYS ABSENCE 152 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR	47 DAYS ABSENCE 143 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR
	100%	97%	90%	85%	80%	75%
	GOOD/EXPECTED Best chance of success		WORRYING Less chance of success, harder to make progress and achieve higher grades		SERIOUS CONCERN Huge impact on academic learning, parents may face court action if no justifiable reason for absence	

Every minute counts!

Punctuality is as important as attendance – every minute lost impacts on learning

In our policy, we state that:

- Any child arriving after 8:55 a.m., but before 9:15 a.m., will be recorded as late on the register (and 'minutes lost' will be recorded)
- Any child arriving after 9:15 a.m. will be recorded as an unauthorised absence on the register
- All children arriving late will enter school through the main entrance and a reason for lateness must be provided

**5 minutes late each school day equals
3 whole school days lost per year**

We also calculate 'minutes lost' when minutes of education are missed through an early pick-up before the end of the school day – which is unauthorised. So for example, a GP appointment where no evidence of the appointment has been provided will be recorded as minutes lost as would being collected early for non-medical purposes (holiday).