

February 2024

Attendance Matters



Dear parents/carers

At Branfil Primary School we firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for the educational progress and overall wellbeing of our pupils. We hope that this letter helps you to keep in mind the key aspects of our attendance policy found on our website <https://branfil.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Attendance-Policy.pdf>

Why regular attendance matters

Consistent school attendance allows your child to:

- Fully engage in learning and make academic progress
- Develop critical social skills by interacting with their friends and teachers
- Grow in confidence in a supportive and nurturing school environment
- Build a sense of routine and responsibility, essential for future success

Attendance support

We understand that some pupils face challenges that impact their attendance. Our school's attendance team is here to provide support and guidance to pupils and families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do reach out to Mrs Metcalfe, the Assistant Headteacher and SENCo, or Mrs Taylor, the Attendance Officer.

We set a target of 96% attendance for all pupils, which allows for children to have occasional days off if they are too unwell to attend school. An Educational Welfare Officer from the London Borough of Havering works with the school to support families to ensure that children attend school every day.

Rewards for good attendance

We strive to promote high attendance and punctuality. Every Friday, during Celebration Assembly, any classes with 97% or over receive an attendance 'certicard' which is displayed on their classroom door; at the end of each term, the class with the most 'certicards' are awarded with extra outdoor play time. A class with 100% attendance for that week is awarded a special certificate too.





To help promote attendance throughout the school, all children receive a certificate if they maintain attendance of 97% and above during a term. The Government guidelines are that children are expected to have no less than 96% attendance. Children who have 100% attendance across the whole academic year receive a badge and certificate.

Acceptable reasons for absence

We recognise that there are circumstances where a pupil's absence cannot be avoided.

Acceptable reasons for being for being absent from school include:

- Illness: when your child is unwell, either physically or mentally, and unable to attend school
- Medical appointment: if your child has a medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours, please notify us in advance and provide relevant documentation (eg. an appointment card, copy of a text message or email)
- Religious observance: we respect the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our pupils. If your child needs to be absent for religious observance, please submit a request via attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk. You will be asked to complete a leave of absence form which will be given to Mrs Sansom to approve the absence.

How to report unplanned absences

In the case of your child being unwell and unable to attend school, please remember to contact the school when your child is absent **on a daily basis**. You can either email: attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk or telephone the school on 01708 225186 and **press option 1 if you wish to leave a message**. Please leave your **child's name, class and reason for absence**; do not just say your child is unwell as we need to record a reason. If you wish to speak to a member of the office staff, please hold on the line and your call will be answered. If the school do not hear from you, the Attendance Officer will telephone to enquire about your child's whereabouts. A period of absence of 5 days or more may require medical certification.

If your child has sickness or diarrhoea, they will need to remain off school for 48 hours after the symptoms have cleared.

Term-time holidays

Term-time holidays are generally not permitted during the school year. Absences due to term-time holidays are disruptive to learning and lead to missed opportunities in the classroom.

However, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances that require a term-time holiday. In such rare cases please submit a leave of absence form, available from the office or by emailing attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if she considers there to be 'exceptional circumstances' (this does not include family holidays, weddings or birthdays). A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Impact of low attendance

- Missed learning creates learning gaps that will increase when further days are missed
- Children can develop low self esteem due to the learning gaps and this can prevent strong relationships with their peers
- You child will not access the complete curriculum

CHILD'S ATTENDANCE AT THE END OF THE YEAR	NUMBER OF DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL
100%	Perfect attendance – 0 days off school in a year
99%	2 days off school in a year
97%	5 days off school in a year
95%	10 days off school in a year
93%	14 days off school in a year
90%	19 days off school in a year
Below 90%	More than 20 days off school in a year. You will receive an attendance letter. If the attendance does not improve you will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. This may lead to sanctions, court and penalties against the parents/carers.

Lateness

It is highly important that children are punctual for school and need to arrive before the gates close at 8:45am. After this time your child needs to sign in at the main office. Any absences up to 30 minutes are recorded as a late mark. However, after this it is recorded as a U which is classed as an unauthorised absence. Lateness can have a detrimental effect on children's learning and wellbeing; even short delays can soon add up to much learning time.

BE ON TIME!

Getting to school on time really does matter – every minute of school missed is a missed opportunity to learn

5 minutes late every day	3 days of lost learning
10 minutes late every day	6.5 days of lost learning
15 minutes late every day	10 days of lost learning
20 minutes late every day	13 days of lost learning
25 minutes late every day	19 days of lost learning

There may be a genuine reason for lateness – if you are going to be late try to inform the school beforehand

Please help us by ensuring your child attends school unless they are too unwell to do so, and arrives on time each day.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Sansom
Headteacher