

ATTENDANCE/TARDY POLICY

Balsam Academy is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good, punctual attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Full attendance is essential to the all round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and can put pupils at risk of educational under-achievement and encourage anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent and to send a letter confirming the reason on a child's return to school. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that a child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:55am. All pupils that arrive late must report to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies the Level head of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Level Head to ensure that:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register.
- Parents are informed twice per year of a child's attendance figure.
- Appropriate strategies are put into place to support pupils and families whose attendance is causing concern.

Lateness

- At Balsam Academy the register is taken at 9:00am. Pupils arriving after this must report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').
- The register will close at 9:20am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.
- Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents at parent consultations and may be referred to the Head of School. It can provide grounds for notice.

Authorising Absence

Only the Level Head/ School Head/ Deputy Head/ can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The Head/ School Head/ Deputy Head/ is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip

Leave of Absence/Holiday

Time off school for family holidays is not a right. Schools have discretion to allow up to 10 days absence in a school year for leave in special circumstances such as:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time **if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education;**
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Balsam Academy will consider each request for holiday absence individually but will only grant such requests in **exceptional** circumstances.

We will never normally authorise holidays in term time under the following circumstances:

- At the beginning of school terms
- During formal assessments
- Where the child is persistently absent, including because of ill health (25 days absence in the previous year or where there have already been 10 or more days absence in the current year)

Applications for Leave of Absence **MUST** be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested date.