

Attendance Policy

23-24

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1. Aims

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

Promoting good attendance

Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

Acting early to address patterns of absence

Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

Promoting and supporting punctuality to lessons.

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

Improving attendance is the responsibility of all and of the utmost importance in order to ensure all students are safe; and are achieving academically.

However, there are also specific responsibilities within the school:

3.1 **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
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring attendance is the responsibility of all and kept at the forefront of governance thinking by the link inclusion governor

3.2 The **headteacher** is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The **designated senior leader** responsible for attendance 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
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 The **attendance officer** is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- First day absence contacts
- Maintain accurate and timely school records
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officer (internal) and SBC attendance officers to tackle persistent absence
- Work with parents to help them understand and fulfil their legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance.
- Leading on any student cases that have reached the threshold for legal action
- Keeping staff up to date with approaches to improve attendance and any changes to statutory policy
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 The **education welfare officer** is responsible for:

- Reviewing day to day attendance and absence patterns
- To maintain appropriate records, prepare assessments and reports and provide statistics as required.
- First day absence contact

- Work with parents to help them understand and fulfil their legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance.
- Assist in the development of a partnership between home and school.
- Calls, visits and meetings with any student/family with falling attendance
- Overseeing students on punctuality plans and attendance plans
- Working with DSL and DSL team to ensure wrap around support for students/families
- Frequent communication with the Inclusion hub leads for students based with them to improve attendance
- Liaison with local EWOs with shared families for joint support work
- Ensure all parents/carers have

3.6 The Directors of Study and Deputy Directors of Study are responsible for:

- Reviewing the data set for their year group
- Ensuring form tutors are vigilant and complying with expectations (see 3.8 below)
- Overseeing those students in their year group with a dropping profile 94.9-90%% including liaison with home
- Ensuring all home contacts or contact attempts are noted on ClassCharts

3.7 Form tutors are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office within the first 10 minutes of registration and lessons.
- Contacting home for those students with emerging attendance concerns
- Celebrating attendance above 95% or rapidly improving to this level
- Ensuing all home contacts or contact attempts are noted on ClassCharts

3.8 School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance officer and DOS in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Ensuing all home contacts or contact attempts are noted on ClassCharts

3.8 Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call 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

3.9 Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time every school day

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

All students on roll, including dual rolled, are on the school's attendance register

An attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of every subsequent lesson. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Every entry on the attendance register is kept for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school and be at roll call by 8:40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken as soon as students get to their form room from roll call and will be kept open until 8:50 am. The register for the following five sessions of the day will be taken within the first 10 mins of the lesson commencing.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office number, sending an email or registering the absence through their personalised ClassCharts app [see also section 7].

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified (text message and call) of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence, e.g. holiday forms or email showing scheduled appointments[See section 5].

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If students arrive at school after 8.45, they will be marked as late and a detention issued for that evening.

The registers are closed 30 mins after the start of the day. At this point, any late students will be marked as absent.

Parents/carers will be able to see attendance and lateness via the ClassCharts parent app.

Persistent lateness will result in a meeting with parents being called and the student being placed on an attendance plan under the supervision of the EWO.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Make contact with the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school considers it an unauthorised absence and liaises with DOS for further investigation.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not.

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

If the absence continues, the school will involve the education welfare officer/DSL team for a home visit. Students with known attendance/punctuality or safeguarding concerns will be the priority.

Where attendance/punctuality continues to be a concern, further support and monitoring will be activated [see appendix 2 - school procedure 23-24]

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via reports and parent events. Form tutors and other members of the Beechwood community will make contact if there are concerns regarding attendance.

Parents are able to check attendance daily via the ClassCharts app.

Good attendance will also be celebrated and rewarded across the school.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as including:

- Funeral or wedding of a close family member
- Religious observance
- Sporting events or performing arts competitions at county or national level, if the student is participating
- Graduation ceremony of an immediate family member

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, current attendance record of the student, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via email upon request to the attendance officer. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments [see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail]

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Beechwood works closely with the local authority to support high attendance to school. Targeted support meetings with the LA should take place termly and may active a parenting contract for some families.

Procedures are in place at a school level to follow the government guidance for Education Support Order and Parenting Orders should the local authority/court deem that it has reached this stage [see appendix 2] and implement these.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Rewards and strategies to improve attendance are across the school and at every level.

Weekly checks of attendance are rewarded by form tutors and DOS teams. Top form groups for attendance and punctuality are rewarded (assemblies and certificates issued). Trips and visits are also offered for high attending/most improving attendance students. This will be a focus for the Deputy Director of Studies.

Attendance is celebrated through Fab Friday meetings and Termly tea parties with the Headteacher.

There is a section on attendance and punctuality in every parent bulletin.

New strategies are shared with staff through weekly briefings, as is the impact of their work.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor daily attendance to school and to lessons
- Deploy the On Call system to find any students late to lesson
- Look at patterns on a daily, weekly, fortnightly basis and across groups, cohorts, other key factors
- The attendance team and their SLT lead meet fortnightly re review the impact of actions
- SLT discuss attendance frequently
- Attendance is a key factor of governance monitoring
- Slough LA have daily access to attendance figures
- Targeted support meetings with the local authority happen termly

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

Analyse attendance and absence data weekly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Ensure all school-based stakeholders have access to accurate and up to the minute attendance data, at an appropriate level, through ClassCharts.
- Provide regular attendance reports to DOS, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student 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 of students who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Work to identify the underlying cause of non-attendance on an individual basis
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance - both internally and externally to the school
- Work jointly with external agencies assigned to individual students and their families
- Visit student homes

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually by the Headteacher. 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
- Therapeutic Behaviour policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion 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
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

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
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
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
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Appendix 2: Beechwood School procedures

Working together to improve attendance (p8)	Effective school attendance improvement and management (p33)					
Expect	Prevention	<i>Clearly shared high expectations for attendance and the reasons for it</i>				
		School - parent/carer expectations	Vision and culture	Policies	Frequent communications parents - events/newsletter/web site	Home/school charter
		School - staff expectations	Staff training	Staff briefings		
		School - students expectations	Assemblies	PSHCE lessons	Form time	
		Local Authority	Daily shared data (Studybugs)	LA - Targeted Support Meetings	PA/SA working party	
		Government	Statutory requirements (DofEd)	Guidance (DofEd)*		
		Attendance level	Action			
		<i>Includes punctuality triggers</i>				
Monitor		Attendance 97+	Recognised in form/assemblies/tea parties/messages home			
		Attendance 95% +	Encouraged to increase further			
	Early intervention					
Listen & Understand		Attendance 90 - 95%	Monitored weekly			
Facilitate and Support			Contact home for dropping profiles: Mo [Monitoring group]			
Formalise support	Targeted	PA - below 90%	Triggers School Attendance Monitoring Plan- 4 week with review -informal written AW/AW-L [Attendance watch/late watch] Due to MH concern, moves to Explore (SCU) If External behaviour concerns - Compass (MAH) If cognitive concerns/EHCP assessment placement - Horizons (KSA) If known safeguarding concerns - Safeguarding team (MGA) If improves - moves back to early stages Mo [Monitoring group] If limited improvement - reviewed and stay in place for a further 4-weeks AW/AW-L [Attendance watch/late watch] If no improvement - moves to stages below, as appropriate: Refer to other agencies, as appropriate (MARF)			
		SA - below 50%	Discussed at Targeted support meetings (LA) <i>The following will be applied if/when required, in discussion with professionals, always with the intent of securing improvement for attendance and when the resources of the school have been exhausted without sustained improvements to attendance. Time scales will be kept short and reviewed frequently to ensure poor attendance patterns do not become entrenched.</i>			
Enforce			Parenting Contract - formal written school/LA Warning Period - FPN will be applied if no improvement Fixed Penalty Notice Education Supervision Order Prosecution Parenting Order			
			<i>Holidays - unauthorised during school time could lead straight to LA involvement and potential FPN</i>			