



Attendance Policy

Bennerley Fields School

Introduction

We aim to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all of our pupils.

We are proud to be working as an Inclusive Attendance school. We are committed to ensuring our practices are evidence informed and centred around the child. We promote a shared understanding of everyone's roles and responsibilities in regard to attendance.

Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Promote good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils.
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, carers, pupils, teachers and governors.

Roles & Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals have.

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

- Reviewing and challenging attendance data and working with school leaders providing support and challenge.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs.
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at school.
- Reporting school-level absence data to governors.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies or support plans for individual pupils.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.
- Issuing fixed penalty notices where necessary on the advice of the designated senior leader responsible for attendance.

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Arranging support from Family Support Worker to work with parents to improve attendance.
- Working with the attendance team to monitor, analyse and report concerns.
- Liaising with external agencies where needed.
- In partnership with parents/carers and the attendance team, to discuss and support attendance concerns through creating individualised action plans.

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and analysing data with designated senior leader and attendance team.
- Providing regular attendance data to the designated senior leader and attendance team through regular meetings.

- Along with the designated senior leader they will advise the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

The Attendance Team

The Attendance Team (Designated Senior Leader, Attendance Officer and Family Support Worker) is responsible for:

- Having regular attendance meetings to discuss persistent absentees and any other attendance issues.
- Working with families and pupils to support them to improve attendance.
- Supporting and developing individual plans as needed.

Class Teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis for both morning and afternoon sessions.
- Using the correct codes and submitting this information on Arbor by close of registration.
- Reporting any attendance information received from parents/carers to the office.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns linked to attendance to a designated safeguarding lead.

School Office

The school office are responsible for:

- Taking calls/messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording the information on Arbor.
- Contacting parents/carers regarding any unexplained absence.
- Transferring calls/messages from parents/carers to a member of the pastoral team to provide support.
- Sharing daily absence data to SLT/Attendance Team with reasons for absence and/or actions required.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children.
- Contacting the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

The Designated Senior Leader is Anna Shelton and can be contacted via the school office (info@bennerleyfields.derbyshire.sch.uk).

The Attendance Officer is Sarah Allen and can be contacted via the school office (info@bennerleyfields.derbyshire.sch.uk) or 0115 932 6374.

The Family Support Worker is Shirley Sewell and can be contacted via the family support email address (familysupport@bennerleyfields.derbyshire.sch.uk) or 0115 932 6374

The Pastoral Team are Clare Dunne and Gemma Cox and can be contacted via the school office (info@bennerleyfields.derbyshire.sch.uk) or 0115 932 6374.

Registration

Registration is between 8:55am and 9:15am.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the electronic attendance register at the beginning of the morning (by 9:15am) and afternoon session (by 1:15pm for stages 1 to 3 and by 1:45 for stage 4).

All attendance records are documented using Arbor. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule.

Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school office as soon as possible on the first day of absence, by 9:00am.
- Let us know how long you expect your child to be absent.
- Give us the reason for absence.

Following up unexplained absence

If your child is absent the school will follow our attendance procedure (as detailed in Appendix 1) including:

- Call the pupil's parent or carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Contact all emergency contacts if there is no response from the parent/carer.
- Ascertain the reason for the absence and identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Call the parent or carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents or carers to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention as appropriate.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the absence.

In the case of persistent absenteeism, arrangements may be made to speak to a member of the Attendance/Pastoral Team to discuss and offer support.

Warning Letters and Penalty Notice Fines may be issued as follows:

Persistent Absence

The school can refer to Derbyshire County Council for investigation/ legal intervention if the absence meets the following criteria;

- Two consecutive weeks of unauthorised absence • Secondary school age – 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 5-week period
- Primary school age – 5 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 5-week period, or 10 sessions of authorised absence in a 5-week period where no medical evidence has been received.
- Persistent absence threshold met within the last 12 months and where there is some current unauthorised absence.

Recording attendance

We use the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the school Attendance Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending 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.

(See Appendix 1 for DfE attendance codes and definitions).

Expected levels of attendance

Research shows that attendance and punctuality has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. At Bennerley Fields School, we aim for all pupils to achieve attendance that is at least **90%**. If attendance falls below expected levels, we will follow a graduated response to support the pupil and family to bring about change.

Illness

Not all illness requires an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, ear aches etc. we would not expect pupils to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school, they should follow the absence procedure.

Medical appointments

Parents should avoid making routine medical appointments and dental appointments during the school day, as far as possible. In the majority of cases, appointments can be made outside of the school day/during the school holidays.

Pupils are encouraged to attend school prior to or after the medical appointment if possible.

Parents may be asked to provide a copy of the appointment letter or card.

Procedure for requesting a planned absence in term time

The Department of Education make it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any requests for term time leave should be made in writing via the school office and submitted as soon as possible.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold (Attendance code G).

Approval for term-time absence

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 will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as situations such as:

- Weddings/funerals/death of a close relative
- Housing crisis/safeguarding crisis

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in an email to info@bennerleyfields.derbyshire.sch.uk

Barriers to attendance

Pupils may face barriers to attending school due to physical/mental health conditions or SEND. Attendance ambition is still the same as any other pupil, but additional support may be provided. School will:

- Understand individual needs of the pupil and family.

- Work in partnership with the pupil and family to put in school support and other agencies where external support is needed.
- Regularly review and update the support approach to make sure we continue to meet individual needs.

Punctuality

The school starts at 8:55am and registration will close at 9.15 am.

It is important that pupils are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Pupils must attend on time to be given a present mark for the session. If a pupil arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

Pupils arriving late for school and will have to report to the school office, where a late (L) (before registers closed) will be recorded. In the case of unavoidable delay for pupils using school transport, this will not incur a late mark. Where a pupil arrives after the register closes this will be classed as an unauthorised absence (code U) and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9:30am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

The registers are monitored to identify pupils who are arriving late and regular late arrival for school will be monitored and analysed as part of regular attendance meetings. Parents and Carers will be contacted and identify if there is any support that can be offered to improve punctuality. If support is not appropriate regular lateness will then be challenged as not acceptable.

Reporting to parents

The school expects attendance of at least 90%.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via a letter.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore, where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

School early intervention for supporting school attendance is offered as stated in this policy.

Please contact our family support team for any help:

familysupport@bennerleyfields.derbyshire.sch.uk

Attendance Intervention

Where attendance falls below 90%, the designated senior leader and the family support worker will work together identify any barriers to attendance. Where barriers are identified, the designated senior leader and the family support worker will work with the family on an attendance plan with the aim of improving overall attendance.

When a pupil has been absent for 3 consecutive days with no reason given and no contact from the family, a home visit will be made by 2 members of staff (one of which will be the family support worker or the designated senior leader).

School will acknowledge improved attendance and attendance over 90% through positive emails and calls with families. These will also be shared with class teams and pupils (if appropriate). These positive working relationships with families means that attendance and punctuality can be celebrated.

National framework for penalty notices

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority. (See Appendix 3)

Legislation

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- o Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- o Maintained schools: Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- o Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- o [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- o [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- o The [Equality Act 2010](#)
- o [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

It also refers to:

- o [School census guidance](#)
- o [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- o [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- o [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- o Safeguarding and Child Protection Part 2
- o Behaviour – Positive Engagement policy
- o Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School
- o Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Needs
- o Mental health and wellbeing
- o Early Years Foundation Stage

Appendix (1)

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration. Pupil must be physically attending and excludes virtual learning)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Part-time timetable	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered	Approved Education setting
E	Excluded or Suspended (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments. Physical or Mental).	Authorised absence
J1	Interview or admission to another educational institution	Approved Education Activity
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Approved Education by LA
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
Q	Lack of access arrangements (LA failed to make access arrangements).	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes (pupil is a mobile child)	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity

D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Not required to be in school (pupil is non-compulsory school age is not required to attend)	
Y1	Transport not available	Absent – unavoidable cause
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Absent – unavoidable cause
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Absent – unavoidable cause
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Absent – unavoidable cause
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Absent – unavoidable cause
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Absent – unavoidable cause
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	Absent – unavoidable cause
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

KEY

Present
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Not counted in possible attendances

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised, e.g. if a child refuses to attend.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the school, even if the absence is supported by the parent.

Persistent Absence (PA):

Missing 10% or more of schooling

Appendix (2)

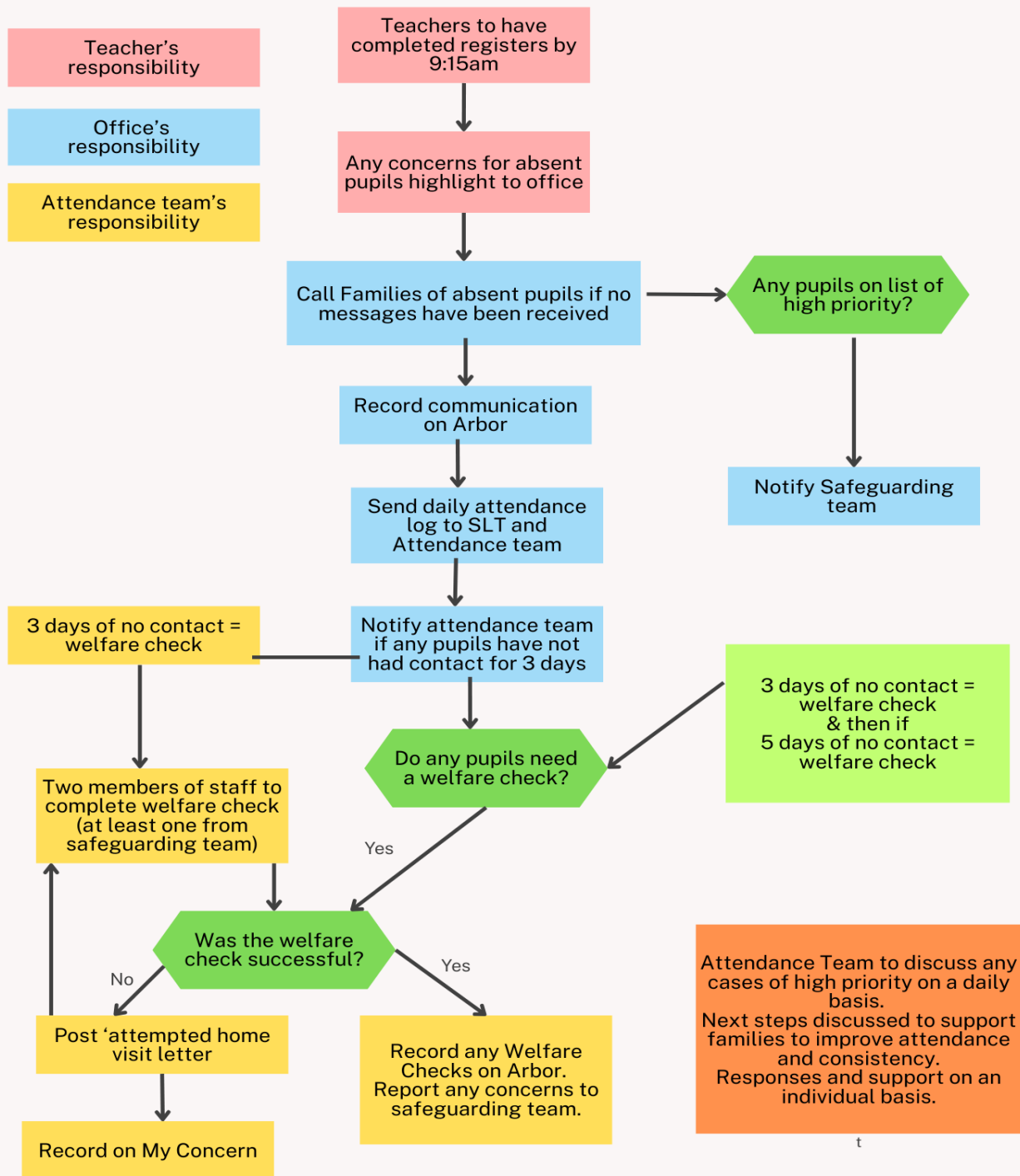
ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES



Teacher's responsibility

Office's responsibility

Attendance team's responsibility





Attendance Policy

Version	Reviewed in School	Approved by GB/SLT/HT/IG	Ratified at LGB	Minute Number
1 – Date Approved	-	-	2012	-
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1	08.02.2021	06.03.2021	22.03.2021	12.3
2	01.12.2021	01.12.2021	06.12.2021	15.1
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Version	Reviewed in School	Approved by GB/SLT/HT/IG	Approved on GVO on
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