

# Attendance Policy

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## Section One

*“Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare and should therefore be seen as everyone’s responsibility in school.”*

*DfE working together to improve school attendance August 2024*

### Rationale:

At Briarwood School we recognise the clear link between consistent attendance, achievement and pupil wellbeing. The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance; parents, pupils, governors and all school staff. Regular attendance at school is a legal requirement. As a school we expect the highest level of attendance from all pupils.

Attendance rates for special schools are generally below those of mainstream schools because of the complex nature of some of our pupils’ special needs. Unfortunately, some of our pupils are more prone to illness and hospitalisation.

We also recognise the importance of close home-school partnerships in supporting our pupils’ optimum attendance, see our home school agreement for more information.

### Objectives:

- \* To create a shared understanding of the importance of regular and consistent attendance on positive outcomes for pupils
- \* To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities in ensuring regular and consistent attendance for pupils
- \* To ensure processes are in place to monitor attendance
- \* To ensure all stakeholders are aware of support available to support attendance
- \* To build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

This policy should be read in conjunction with our safeguarding policy.

### Key Contact Details:

Senior Attendance Champion - Tina Oram (Pastoral Assistant Headteacher) [tina.oram@bristol-schools.uk](mailto:tina.oram@bristol-schools.uk)

If you have day to day attendance concerns, please contact your child or young person’s class teacher in the first instance.

If you would like more detailed support on attendance please contact your child or young persons Head of School;

Aggie Bennett - Briarwood Infants - 0117 4036411 - Queen Ann Road, Barton Hill, Bristol, BS5 9TX

Alistair Mackintosh - Briarwood Juniors 0117 3532651 - Briar Way, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 4EA

Cathryn Davies - Briarwood Secondary and NEXUS Centre 0117 3773042 - Snowdon Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 2HD

Sarah Lane-Batt -Briarwood Sixth Form 0117 3532651 - Briar Way, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 4EA

## Duties and responsibilities

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families.

### The governing board:

1. To recognise the importance of school attendance
1. To promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
2. To make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
3. To regularly review and challenge attendance data
4. Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
5. To make sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
6. To hold the Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### Executive Headteacher:

1. To have overall responsibility for whole school attendance and the Implementation of this policy.
2. To issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

### Pastoral Assistant Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion):

1. To liaise with Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Executive Leadership Team (ELT), teachers and administration staff.
2. To monitor the process for pupil absences.
3. To identify persistent and severe absentees and support the creation of action plans with individualised reasonable adjustments to support attendance.
4. To liaise with families, and where appropriate an Education Welfare Officer to develop intervention packages for pupils with persistent absences.
5. To publish a mid-year and annual data reports to the governing body.
6. To attend meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
7. To Inform the LA of students whose attendance has not improved within 15 days, where has been offered and work together to formalise support or to enforce attendance through legal intervention.

### Heads of Schools:

1. To liaise with Senior Leadership Team (SLT), teachers and administration staff.
2. To monitor the process for pupil absences

3. To identify persistent absences and set individual targets create action plans with individualised reasonable adjustments to support attendance.
4. To arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

Teachers:

1. To keep accurate attendance registers at the beginning of each sessions, morning and afternoon
2. To indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised using the agreed coding system (see Appendix 1)
3. To identify pupils with poor or irregular attendance and inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team

Pastoral admin co-ordinator:

1. To ensure that all absences are identified and recorded systematically and accurately, and followed up quickly and appropriately in ways that promote high levels of attendance and punctuality.
2. To review and monitor attendance across the school and highlight concerns to the Pastoral Assistant Head.
3. To train staff in registration and attendance procedures.
4. To produce reports and statistics on attendance, punctuality, missing marks for a range of audiences as required.

Admin team:

1. To take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
2. To transfer calls from parents to the Heads of Schools or the Pastoral Assistant Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
3. To follow the "Process for Monitoring Pupil Absence" in Appendix 3.

Parents:

1. To ensure that their child/young person attends school every day on time.
2. To provide an explanation for any absences by phone, email or letter, and advise when they are expected to return.
3. To ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child/young adult are made outside of the school day.
4. To provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

## All partners should 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 and 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 an attendance 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: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## Section Two:

### Absences

The school accept absences for the following reasons:

- Illness (physical and mental health related).
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Term time absences for families with exceptional circumstances: e.g. to facilitate essential respite

The school will try to contact families where no information regarding the absence has been shared. This is to ensure the child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of a child's attendance or punctuality we will contact the family to discuss the best way forward.

### Authorised Term Time Absences

In exceptional circumstances, families may need to request permission for their child not to be in school during term time. These requests will be made directly to the Executive Headteacher and permission will be given at their discretion following careful consideration of the child's age, the time of year, overall attendance pattern and the circumstances given.

### Unauthorised Absences

The school will not authorise absence for holidays, day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays – unless in exceptional circumstances.

### Lateness and punctuality

A pupil 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 late after the registration has closed, using the appropriate code.

In both occasions the reason of the lateness should be included.

In the case of perpetual absence school leaders should arrange a meeting with the family to discuss reasons behind the lateness and put reasonable adjustments in place to improve the student's punctuality.



## Section 3

### Monitoring

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Executive Leadership team will formally monitor attendance data twice a year.
  - Pastoral Assistant Head will monitor the attendance data, using a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) system and the impact of attendance intervention programmes each term and report any concerns to the SLT.
  - Unauthorised absences will be followed up to ascertain the reason, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken and to signpost to additional multiagency support. This may result in a referral being made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and a penalty notice being issued.
  - Authorised term time absences will be monitored separately. A RAG system will highlight the number of requests being made and provide an overview of time taken.
- The protocol for pupils who fall into the lower percentage of attendance is as follows:
1. An action plan will be drafted and agreed with reasonable adjustments a meeting with parents and other potential agencies who can offer support to improve a student's attendance.
  2. Attendance monitoring from the school leadership team in conjunction with the EWO.
  3. Regular meetings and contact with parents/carers.
  4. Involvement of a multi-agency team.
  5. If the above interventions are not successful and the attendance does not improve, a formal referral will be made to the EWO and their service will become activity involved.

#### Attendance Return to the Local Authority:

All schools are required to provide the Local Authority with the full name and addresses of any pupils of compulsory school age who, who since the last time an attendance return was made:

- \* has failed to attend school regularly; or
- \* has been absent from school for a continuous period of at least ten school days where absence is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised

#### Sickness Return to the Local Authority:

All schools are required to provide the LA with the full name and address of any pupil of compulsory school age if:

- \* the pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using Code I and
- \* the school has reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will be absent for 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively.

### Links with Other Briarwood Policies

- Home School Agreement Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes
- Appendix 2 – Guide for parents
- Appendix 3 – Process for monitoring pupil absence
- Appendix 4 – Reference List

**Review Date: September 2025**

### Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

Code	School Meaning	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Attending any other approved education activity (e.g. AP)	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
K	Attending education provision provided by the Local Authority	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before reg closed at 9.30am)	Present	Late for session

M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance	
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Present	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.	
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.	
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.	
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.	
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.	
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance.	
Y	Exceptional Circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session

## Appendix 2 – Guide for Parents/ Carers

### 1) When does my child need to be in school?

School opens for pupils at 9.00am. Your child should be ready in good time for the school transport to ensure that they arrive on time

### 2) Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We require parents/carers to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. This will be followed up with a letter requesting this information if we are unable to contact you.

If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

### 3) What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Term time absences for families with exceptional circumstances (see question 6)

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details.

### 4) What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for holidays, day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays – unless in exceptional circumstances.

### 5) Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school will try to contact you, if we have not heard from you. This is to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

### 6) Can we take term time absences?

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to not be in school during term time, you should complete an application form, stating the reason why. The Executive Headteacher has

the right to refuse permission having given consideration to: your child's age, the time of year, overall attendance pattern of your child and the circumstances given.

### **7) What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

### **8) My child is reluctant to come to school. What should I do?**

Contact the school to discuss any concerns or worries. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to resolve the problem.

In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. Please contact the school if you would like the contact details of the Education Welfare Service.

## Appendix 3 - Process for Monitoring Pupil Absence

### **Before school:**

Parents to inform school by phone/letter of any pupil absence

### **Registration:**

Teachers will complete the school register stating if the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Unauthorised absences will be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Where we have no reason for a pupil's absence;**

If your child is absent from school, please contact the office by 9:30am to inform us. If we have not heard by 9:30am we will send a text message informing you of your child's absence and ask you to call the school office. If we have not heard from anyone by 10:30am, we will contact the emergency contacts for your child. If your child is then absent the following day and the school has not received a reason, then we may make a visit to your house to check that your child is ok.

Where contact with the family cannot be made, school may conduct a home welfare check and seek advice from the Education Welfare Team. This is to ensure that the pupil is safe and well and to offer families support to enable their child or young person to return to school.

### **Persistent Absences**

The Assistant Head teacher, in liaison with the Executive Headteacher, will contact the family to discuss the reasons for the absence and an action plan will be put in place to support. This will be treated sensitively and may require the involvement of multi-agency professionals.

## Appendix 4 - Requesting a reason for a pupil's absence

### Template Text:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ is absent from school today. Please could you contact the school office on \_\_\_\_\_ to inform us of the reason for their absence.

### Template Letter:

Date

Dear

### Re:

Your child/young person has been absent from school today but we received no message from you regarding this, we were unsuccessful in trying to contact you today.

We would be grateful if you could please confirm your child's absence by phone or returning the slip below stating the reason for absence.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Nicolle Deighton  
Executive Headteacher

.....

For the attention of the Office

### Absence Reply Slip

Childs Name: ..... Date(s) of absence .....

Reason for absence (please tick box) a) sickness   
b) appointment   
c) other reason   
(please state reason) .....

Signed: .....

Date: .....

## Reference List

DFE (August 2024) "Working together to improve school attendance"

DFE (February 2023) " Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance"

DFE (September 2016) "Children missing education"

DFE (January 2015) "Schools attendance parental responsibility measures"

Gov.uk notes (February 2017) "School attendance and absence"

Ofsted (August 2016) "School inspection handbook"

Taylor C (2012) "Improving attendance at school"