



BRITANNIA
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Britannia Education Trust

Attendance Policy

Reviewed by Curriculum Committee March 2025

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Introduction

This policy represents our commitment to striving for 100% attendance, which is achievable, and is achieved by many children. It sets out the principles, procedures and practise the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor Attendance and Punctuality are also detailed. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance 2024](#)

[School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is parents'/carers' legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.

These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Children Act 1989, and other associated pieces of legislation.

Aims of the Policy

- To ensure that all children attend as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To discharge the school's duty to safeguard the health, welfare and social and emotional development of its pupils to the best of its ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff and governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of Newham's children and young people and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood.
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement
- To maximise the potential of every individual pupil

Promoting Attendance

The Trustees, Headteacher and staff will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home/school agreement, newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance.

Heads have the discretion to authorise up to ten days leave of absence in term-time. However, that discretion will only be exercised in the **MOST EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances.

At each school the Attendance Champion is The Headteacher.

95% equates to half a day off every two weeks

90% equates to a day off every two weeks

85% equates to one and a half days off every two weeks

80% equates to one whole day off every week

A secondary age child whose attendance is 80% will have missed ONE WHOLE YEAR of education by the time they leave school

Informing the school of absences

For on the day absences, such as absences due to illness, parents should email the school's absence email address.

For planned absences, such as funerals, the Term Time Leave form should be completed, which can be found on each school website.

Unauthorised Absences

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments (which unavoidably need to be scheduled within school hours) and emergencies.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents
- Birthdays
- Minding other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Travelling for parent's work (with the exception of 'mobile children')
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Arriving at school too late to receive a present mark
- Truancy
- Death of a pet

Authorised Absences (other than illness):

Only the Headteacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad:
in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).
- Attending an interview:
for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave:
for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable:
where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances:
All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not

maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Other circumstances that may be authorised

- **Reluctant attenders/school refusal:**
You should do everything possible to encourage your child to attend school. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be school-based, such as difficulty with work or bullying, please discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve the problem. Colluding with your child's reluctance to attend is likely to make the matter worse. School refusal/school phobia is a psychological condition that usually has been medically diagnosed. Other arrangements may be put in place for a child with genuine school phobia.
- **Religious Observance**
We will treat single days of absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. Following DfE guidance, the day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, School staff will seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. The School will expect to be notified by parents in advance if their child(ren) will be absent for religious observance.

Vulnerable Children

Children who are Looked After (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) and Children in Need (CIN) will be treated with highest priority and will be known to the Attendance Officer. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home or a home visit. Other professionals involved with the pupil, such as Social Workers or Families First Workers may also be notified. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be treated with similar priority in order that their time in school can be maximised, and their learning supported to the greatest extent possible.

Procedures

Admission Procedures

When a child is admitted to one of the Britannia Education Trust schools, their full details, including contact details of parents, carers and other relevant adults, are added to the schools' electronic management system. The Local Authority allocates places and are informed by the school when pupils leave and are removed from the school roll.

Registration and Punctuality procedures

Registers are taken twice a day, once at the start of the school day and once during the afternoon session. Pupils arriving before the end of the Registration period will be coded L (Late before registers close) which is a present mark. The number of minutes late will be recorded in the register. The registers will remain open until 9:15 am. Pupils arriving after the registers have closed will be coded U (late after registers close) which counts as an unauthorised absence. Ten unauthorised absences (including late after registers close) in a rolling period of ten weeks of school will result in a Penalty Notice being issued. This period can cross terms and academic years.

The school expects all pupils to be in class by 8:45 am. Gates open at 8:35 am to give parents and carers a suitable period of time to drop their children off at school.

Absence Procedures

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view, and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (Unauthorised absence). If the reason given for the absence is received more than 5 days after the absence, the O code cannot be changed, regardless of the reason for the absence. Absence notes received from parents/carers will be kept for the remainder of the academic year; or longer if there are concerns that require further investigation or legal action.

First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school each day if their child is unable to attend for an unavoidable reason, such as illness. If the school does not receive notification, it will text/telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason.

Second Day Absence Contact

If the child is still absent on the second day without contact from the family, a telephone call will be made to the home.

Continuing Absence Procedures

In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made.

Absence of ten sessions (5 full days, or 10 half days) that are unauthorised, will be reported to the Local Authority and will usually result in a Penalty Notice.

Persistent Absence

We follow the process outlined below.

Identification

Pupils with attendance of 90% or below fall into the category of 'Persistently Absent'. A list of persistently absent pupils is created weekly and an attendance meeting is carried out, where the attendance team discuss the appropriate action to be taken to improve attendance for these pupils.

Early Intervention (Informing & Supporting)

In the first instance, actions taken could take the form of calls home, letters, meetings or anything else deemed appropriate. Other professionals may be consulted to seek support such as School Health, if the cause of absenteeism may be of a medical nature, and Early Help or Social Services if appropriate. The Trust will aim to identify barriers to attendance and where possible directly address any in-school barriers. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the Trust will support parents to access support and make referrals where necessary.

Stage Two (Referrals & Formal Meetings)

When absence intensifies, so should the support provided. This may include a voluntary referral to an Early Help Assessment or other appropriate outside agency. If engagement in support is challenging, a more formal conversation with parents, and pupils as appropriate, will take place with the school Attendance Champion.

Stage Three (Contracts and Orders)

If support has not been effective or has not been engaged with, formal support may be put in place through an attendance contract or education supervision order. At this stage a Notice to Improve and /or a Penalty Notice may be issued if support would not be appropriate, has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parent's behaviour. Statutory children's social care involvement may be sought where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).

Parenting Contracts

Parents may be asked to participate in a Parenting Contract to support their child's attendance. These are initiated where the school feels that a parent may need help in influencing their child to attend properly. They have no force in law, and are entered into voluntarily. A meeting will be held to which the parent and child will be invited. The problems will be discussed and agreement reached as to what the school will do, the child will do and what the parents/carers will do to try to improve the situation. Parents may be offered some form of support such as counselling or parenting classes to assist in setting boundaries and enforcing expectations of their child.

Appendix 1: example Parenting Contract

Stage Four (Prosecution)

Where all other routes have failed, or are not deemed appropriate, parents may be prosecuted .

Persistent Lateness

If a pupil is persistently late, the Attendance Lead will contact the family as soon as the pattern is identified. In the first instance, actions taken could take the form of calls home, letters, meetings or anything else deemed appropriate. Other professionals may be consulted to seek support such as School Health, if the cause of lateness may be of a medical nature, and Early Help or Social Services if appropriate. The Trust will aim to identify barriers to attendance and where possible directly address any in-school barriers. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the Trust will support parents to access support and make referrals where necessary.

After 10 late attendances, after registers close, in a rolling 10 week period, parents may receive a Penalty Notice, due to 10 Unauthorised absences, in line with absence procedures.

Consequences of Poor Attendance or Punctuality

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following (stage 3 & 4 of Persistent Absence above):

- 1) The school may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice on its behalf. A first Penalty Notice carries a fine of £160, per parent, per child. If the fine is paid within 20 days it decreases to £80 per parent, per child. A second Penalty Notice carries a fine of £160, per parent, per child, with no reduction. If not paid at all, court action will be initiated. In the case of further absenteeism, within a three year period, court action will be initiated in place of further Penalty Notices. Penalty Notices are also issued in the case of term time holidays.
- 2) The school may ask the Council to initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
- 3) In some cases, action may be taken under the Children Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Non-Attendance

There are a number of instances when non-attendance will result in pupils being removed from the school roll. The most pertinent to our Trust are outlined below. The full list can be found in Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024.

Ground A - The pupil has been registered at another school

Ground B - The pupil has not continued at the school following completion of nursery education

Ground F - The parent of a pupil has notified the school in writing that the pupil will be leaving the school to be educated otherwise than at a school

Where the pupil's parent has informed the school in writing that the pupil will no longer attend the school after a certain day and will receive education otherwise than at a school and that day has passed, and there is no school attendance order naming the school in force in relation to the pupil.

Ground G - The pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school

In circumstances where parents are moving away and withdrawing their child but are unable to say how their child will continue with their education, for example, the family are relocating but have not been able to secure a place at a new school in advance, once the pupil has completed their final day at school and moved out of the area, the school must delete the pupil's name from the admission register and the pupil's information should then be transferred to the Lost Pupil Database via the S2S system

Ground H - The pupil has not returned following a leave of absence

Where a pupil has been granted a leave of absence and:

- the pupil has not attended school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period that the leave was granted for,
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause, and
- the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances, but:
 - they have not succeeded, or
 - they have succeeded but they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.

Ground I - The pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days

Ground O - The pupil has been permanently excluded from the school

Procedures for Children who Cease to Attend without Prior Notification (CME)

Children are classified as Children Missing in Education if they cease to attend school without prior notification to the school. If, after ten days continuous absence the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will refer the child's details to the Local Authority for it to perform further checks that are not available to schools. If after 20 days continuous unauthorised absence, their whereabouts cannot be traced, they will be removed from the school roll.

Non starters

Pupils who are allocated places but fail to start are also treated as CME. If the school has been unable to make contact with the family during a ten-day period after their expected arrival, they will refer the pupils to the local authority CME team for further checks.

Appendix 1 - BET MASTER attendance parent contract

Parent Attendance Contract

This contract is designed to support improved school attendance for Kinnda Sung. It outlines the responsibilities of both parents and the school in promoting regular attendance.

1. School Responsibilities:

- Support Kinnda in overcoming any barriers to regular attendance.
- Provide appropriate learning and welfare support for any absences.
- Maintain clear communication regarding attendance issues.

2. Parent Responsibilities:

- Ensure Kinnda attends school regularly and punctually.
- Notify the school of any absence and provide reasons.
- Work with the school to address any attendance concerns.
- Avoid unnecessary absences and ensure any medical or personal concerns are communicated to the school.

3. Action Plan:

- Should attendance continue to fall or if patterns of absence arise, a meeting will be arranged to develop a support plan.
- The school may escalate attendance issues if improvement is not achieved, including engaging external agencies or legal proceedings.

By signing this contract, we agree to collaborate towards the goal of ensuring Kinnda achieves regular and consistent attendance at school.

Signed:

[Parent/Guardian Name] _____ Date: _____

[Headteacher Name] _____ Date: _____