



# Attendance Policy

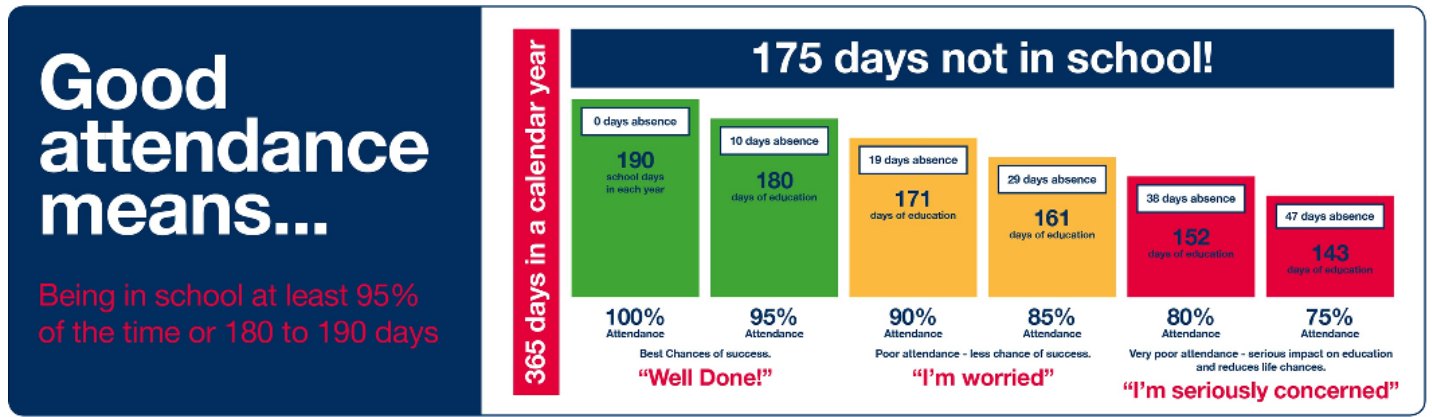


Implementation Date

September 2023

Review Date

September 2024



## 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 pupil 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 pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school.

## 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.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The governing board**

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

### **The headteacher**

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

### **The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Katherine Hart

### **The attendance officer (Supported by Havering Educational Welfare Officer)**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see Attendance Monitoring)
- 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 officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Manjit Kaur and can be contacted via the school office

## **Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

## **School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

## **Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- 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

## **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **Recording attendance**

### **Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the morning of each school day and once during the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present

- Absent

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry

- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not (For pupils of compulsory school age)

- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.45 (KS1) and 1.45 (KS2)

## Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/Carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible.

To report an absence parents/Carers should:

Call the school office. A message may be left on the answerphone from 8.30am if the lines are busy.

Send an email to the school office ([office@benhurst.havering.sch.uk](mailto:office@benhurst.havering.sch.uk))

Notify us via the school website (<https://benhurst.havering.sch.uk/reporting-an-absence/> )

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 pupil'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 of this in advance.

## Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/Carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We will ask for proof of a booked appointment.

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

The pupil's parent/Carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 14 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

See 'Approval for term-time absence' to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

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

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

Letters will be sent to parents/carers if punctuality is identified as a cause for concern.

## Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the pupil'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 pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a welfare check visit to the home address.

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 absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

## Reporting to parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via mid- year and end of year reports.

## Authorised and unauthorised absence

### Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil 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 pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable, for example the death of a close relative. Holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 14 days before the absence, and in accordance with a leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Emergency medical/dental appointments (see 'Planned Absence' for more detail)

Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

Other exceptional circumstances where the headteacher may grant term - time absence.

## Legal sanctions

Holidays during term time, can no- longer be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances, which the Head teacher/Principal must be satisfied about. Any leave unauthorised leave taken during term time, A fine will be issued, this will have to be paid within 21 days. After pupils returns to school, If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

## Strategies for promoting attendance

At Benhurst Primary School, we promote and reward good attendance in the following ways:

- Sharing details on attendance in our newsletters
- Celebrating highest weekly class attendance in assembly
- Weekly Attendance Trophies
- Termly 100% attendance certificates
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance

## **Attendance monitoring**

### **Monitoring attendance**

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data regularly both across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance data to school and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils 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

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil 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 pupils who the school (and the local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

See appendix 2: Flow Chart for monitoring and improving attendance

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by the Designated Senior leader responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

**Appendix 1: attendance codes**

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be

		absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



## Appendix 2: Flow Chart for monitoring and improving attendance

