



Attendance & Punctuality Policy – Primary Schools Highgate Primary

Approved:	Sept 2022 Trust Board Meeting
Review Date:	June 2023
Responsible Officer:	Director of Schools

Trust Mission Statement

Our mission is to create high quality educational opportunities for all children and young people across the partnership by developing a strong collaborative and co-operative model through which we encourage autonomy, share best practice, enhance the professional aspirations of our staff and ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils and staff.

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Highgate Primary seeks to ensure that all their students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her full potential. For students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and punctually. Any absence causes disruption to learning and should be avoided if at all possible. Improving attendance at *Highgate Primary* is the responsibility of everyone in our community – students, parents, governors and staff.

For academies who have children on roll who are below statutory school age, it is the view of BEP that these children fall under the ethos of this policy, as it is important to encourage excellent attendance at school for all our pupils.

Links with other policies

- Children with Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School
- Equality
- SEND
- Child Protection
- Data Protection

AIMS

- To encourage and assist all students in BEP Schools to achieve excellent levels of attendance of above 97%
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the academy including students, parents, staff and governors.
- To maximise attendance across the school population and reduce persistent absenteeism (below 90%).

Department for Education Definition of Persistent Absence:

Persistent absence threshold is 10%

*If a pupil's overall absence rate is **10% or higher**, he/she is classified as a persistent absentee.*

*Pupils are classed as persistently absent based upon their **individual** absence level, not by a comparison to a national threshold.*

See the Department for Education's (DfE) [guidance on pupil absence statistics](#), paragraph 3.2.2.

- To work together with parents/carers in both a supportive and challenging role to achieve high levels of attendance.

STUDENTS

All students are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and to arrive on time. Morning registration will be taken at 8.50am, and afternoon registration at 1pm. Pupils arriving during registration will receive a late mark. Arrival more than 30 minutes after registers close will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Come to school properly equipped and prepared to learn.
- Attend all lessons on time
- Not leave school site without permission from staff and signing out at reception.
- Talk to a member of staff if there is a problem causing them to miss school.

PARENTS/CARERS

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. They are expected to ensure that:

- Their child attends regularly and is punctual, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- They inform the school of the reason for any absence by telephone/email/text call on each morning of absence. The school will then make the decision to either authorise or unauthorise the absence. If no reason is given the absence will be automatically unauthorised
- They know that they will not have holidays authorised during term time
- They make medical and dental appointments outside school time
- They give the school up to date information regarding diagnosed medical conditions which may affect attendance
- They provide the school with up to date contact details

THE ACADEMY

The Academy will:

- Strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
- We incentivise our pupils and families/carers to have full attendance, it is important to safeguard our children and maximise potential. With a series of actions outlined in the 'Attendance guidance' at different stages and rates of attendance. Refer to our 'attendance guidance' in appendix 1 (updated June '22) to ensure best practice.
- Recognise all young people who fall below the Department for Education (DfE) threshold of 90% attendance as Persistent Absentees are therefore a vulnerable group.
- We will contact and support our pupils, families/carers at various rates of attendance if they become of concern. This include below 95% and particularly at 90% which is the threshold for Persistent absence. For all cases at or below 90% the school's HT, or a member of the SLT, will have a meeting with families/carers to look at improving a pupils attendance. We will support

pupils with medical needs and request medical evidence to enable us to put in place the most effective support plan.

- Our day to day processes for managing attendance, requires us to follow up on the first day of any unexplained absence. Where we are unable to make contact with the main contact, we will call other contacts and reserve the right to undertake a home visit to check on the children's welfare.

Contacts:

Trust Attendance & Welfare Lead – Di Cresswell – dcresswell@bepschools.org / 07792311246

School HT – tjenkinson@highgate.bepschools.org / 01509 813968

Person responsible for first contact – Rachael Powell – office@highgate.bepschools.org / 01509 813968

Registration

Registration is a legal requirement and creates an orderly start to the school day. Registers will be called promptly at [8.50] am and [1] pm. Students arriving after the registers are taken will receive a late mark. Any student arriving more than 30 minutes after registers close will in the register be marked absent.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

The Academy's registers will be coded in accordance with the Department of Education mandatory codes – see appendix A.

All absences must be explained by a parent or carer on a daily basis. The school will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence. The view of the Department for Education attendance expert is that "some think they're being a good parent by keeping their child off school, if in doubt send them to school. There is a difference between minor ailments and the sort of illness that warrants a day off."

Some examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- A family day out
- A child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night

Any unexplained absence will be unauthorised.

Absence may be authorised due to:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances

If a student's attendance becomes a cause for concern the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence to substantiate their reasons before the absence can be authorised.

Holidays

The Bradgate Education Partnership Trust policy is that **holidays in term time will not be authorised**. Unauthorised absence **may** be referred to Leicestershire County Council, at the discretion of the Head Teacher. A referral may result in Leicestershire County Council issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Exceptional Leave

The school recognise that there may be times when a student requires exceptional leave during term time for short periods of time. In these circumstances parents are asked to complete the 'Exceptional Leave Form' to request the absence. These requests will be considered by the Principal on an individual basis. Please ensure that the Principal is provided with all evidence and context to support your application for exceptional leave at the point of the initial application as further information provided at a later date will not be considered.

Exceptional leave will not be authorised during examination periods.

Appeal – Exceptional Leave

The decision of the Headteacher is final. However, if you feel that your application for exceptional leave has been unfairly reviewed or that the policy outlined has not been followed you may appeal in writing to the Director of Schools outlining your case. Please note the Director of Schools will not re-hear or re-consider the original application for exceptional leave but will, if required, ensure the Headteacher has reviewed the application according to policy and in a fair and unbiased manner.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

If a student is absent and no reason has been provided the school will contact parents and/or nominated emergency contacts, as part of the safeguarding procedure.

When a student is absent for 3 days or more the school may carry out a welfare home visit.

When a student is persistently late or absent without good reason and the School's efforts to effect change have been unsuccessful a referral may be made to our Attendance & Welfare Officer for further action.

Persistent Absence

The law requires parents and carers to make sure that their children receive a full time education suitable to their needs. Parents and pupils are supported at school to overcome barriers to regular attendance.

As a last resort, schools may request the local authority, through the Pupils Services Court Team, to use its statutory legal powers if parents/carers fail to ensure their child receives an education.

The following sections of the Education Act 1996 apply:

- Section 444(1): if “a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil fails to attend regularly” at the school. This leads to a fine of up to £1000 per parent.
- Section 444(1A): if “the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so” without reasonable justification. This ‘aggravated offence’ leads to a fine of up to £2500 per parent and/or up to 3 months’ imprisonment.

A penalty notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. It would be considered appropriate to serve a notice in the following circumstances:

- overt truancy
- parentally condoned absences
- unauthorised leave of absence / holidays in term-time
- excessive delay in returning from extended holidays without agreement
- persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The Head Teacher will notify the Local Authority when a pupil is likely to be away from the academy for a significant period of time due to their health needs. Academies (working with the Trust Attendance & Welfare Lead) will complete a Children Missing Education (CME) referral to the relevant Local Authority when a child’s attendance cannot be confirmed after 10 days.

APPENDIX A

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (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)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
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
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
\$	Involved in other activity in school	Present

Exceptional Leave Request Form

Child/rens' names and Tutor Group/s/Class	First date of absence
	Last date of absence
	Total number of school days

Reason for Exceptional Leave Request

(Please indicate the reason why this leave needs to be taken in term time - **all** evidence and context to support your application for exceptional leave **must be** provided with this request, as further information provided at a later date will not be considered.)

Please tick if your child has sibling(s) at another school or schools ☐

Name of School(s).....

Name of Parent/Carer Signed.....

Date of request

Academy Use Only

Our records show that to date your child has been absentdays during the current academic year giving them an attendance of%. Last year their attendance was.....%

Having considered your request along with your child's attendance data it has been agreed that this request does/doesn't meet Bradgate Educational Partnership's criteria for Exceptional Leave. Therefore:

- ☐ Your request for Exceptional Leave is granted and your child's absence will be authorised.
- ☐ Your request for Exceptional Leave is not granted. If your child is absent on this occasion their absence will be unauthorised.
- ☐ Your request for Exceptional Leave is not granted. If your child is absent on this occasion their absence will be referred to the Leicestershire County Council for a Fixed Penalty Notice in relation to an unauthorised family holiday during term time.

School Comment

Code

Signed