



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.

Aims

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school
- To improve pupils' progress through good attendance
- To encourage parents/carers to ensure that pupils arrive at school on time
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the school including parents, carers, pupils, teachers and governors

Legislative Framework

Parents/Carers of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (sec 444) to make sure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the education authority if problems cannot be resolved by agreement. All pupils, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of pupils of compulsory school age who are missing education in the area.

Attendance Partnership Expectations

We expect the following from parents and carers:

- They ensure their pupils attend school regularly and punctually
- They ensure that they contact the school, as soon as is reasonably practical, whenever their pupil is unable to attend

Parents/carers and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Early contact when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Follow up support if needed

Expected levels of attendance

Attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for pupils. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are important factors in school success. At Bennerley Fields we expect all pupils to achieve attendance that is at least **90%**.

Roles and Responsibilities for attendance

- Bennerley Fields has a named senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance issues.
- Members of school staff both teaching and non-teaching have responsibility for attendance issues in school.
- Attendance matters are reviewed by Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Attendance issues are reported at least termly to the Local Governing Body.
- The school and family support workers will support families in ensuring their child/children attend school regularly and will make contact with parents by phone, email or home visit to discuss the schools concerns and how attendance and punctuality can be improved.

Absence

If a pupil is absent, parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of absence and leave a message on the telephone by 8.30am to inform the school of the reason for absence. Parents/carers are expected to maintain contact with the school throughout the absence.

At 9.30 am the school registers are checked for any absences where there has been no contact by parents/carers and reason given. If staff are concerned about a pupil's absence they will follow the process detailed in appendix (i). This includes telephone calls to parents, other emergency contacts, home visits and support from the family support worker.

Where school staff have concerns about a pupil, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated (DFE Attendance guidance 2018).

It is imperative that up-to-date contact numbers and details are provided to school. Schools are required to hold more than one emergency contact per pupil (KCSIE 2023) Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides.

Procedures

Where attendance has deteriorated rapidly, there are concerning patterns of absence, a number of unauthorised absences, or parents have not responded to concerns raised a referral may be made straight to the safeguarding DSLs.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Let us know how long you expect your pupil to be absent;
- Give us the reason for absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to school/phone to discuss the situation with a member of staff if necessary;
- Review the implementation of formal procedures if attendance moves below 85%.

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 above absence procedure.

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a pupil's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases a parent's explanation that their pupil is ill can be accepted without question or concern. In circumstances where there are concerns about a pupil's attendance/reason for absence further evidence of a pupil's illness may be requested.

Schools and local authorities need to recognise that parity of esteem for mental health also relates to school attendance, absence and support, as confirmed by DfE

(October 2019) to Square Peg and Not Fine in School. This states that schools are advised to use code I to record illness (both physical and mental health related).

Bennerley Fields will challenge parent's statements or seek additional evidence if they have any concerns regarding a pupil's attendance.

In fact, it is good practice to have clear systems in place to escalate any concerns about high levels of absence due to illness, including agreements about accessing additional services in order to provide appropriate support to pupils, particularly for long term illness.

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Attendance is less than 90%
- There are frequent odd days' absences due to reported illness
- The same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Where there is a particular medical problem and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

Medical appointments

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

Where appointments have to be taken during the school day only the time for the appointment and travel to and from will be classed as an authorised absence. Pupils are expected to return to school for the remainder of the day/attend school prior to the appointment if possible.

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

Other reasons for absence:

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school on each occasion. Notes will **not** necessarily be accepted as proof of valid reasons. The school will follow DfE guidance and not authorise absences for shopping, birthdays or child minding.

Procedure for requesting a planned absence

All leave of absence requests will be unauthorised unless the circumstances are exceptional. A parent/carer should complete an absence request and submit this to the school at least two weeks prior to the date required. School will respond to the request within two weeks. If school is aware of any language difficulties that may preclude a request form being completed appropriate support will be offered to the parent/carer.

- DfE guidelines make clear that leave of absence during term-time should be regarded as exceptional.
- If a parent/carer considers they require their pupil to have a leave of absences for exceptional circumstances they should complete the absence request form which can be obtained from the school office. There is a requirement that parent/carers provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance.
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons for the request are exceptional and authorises the absences a letter confirming that the request has been authorised will be sent to the parent/carer
- If the Headteacher deems that the reasons are not exceptional and the leave of absence will not be authorised. A letter informing the parents of this decision for each pupil and warning of the legal implications of the absence been taken will be sent to each parent.
- If once notified in writing of the decision not to authorise the leave of absence, the absence is taken it will be marked as an unauthorised absence on the pupils register, which could result in a referral being made immediately to the Education Enforcement Team for consideration and could result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

Punctuality

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.

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 as per DfE compulsory attendance codes). **School registration will close at 9.30 a.m.**

The registers are monitored to identify pupils who are arriving late and regular late arrival for school will be challenged as not acceptable.

Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing from Education

A 'child missing from education' is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School should follow the school's procedures for dealing with pupils that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in the future.

All schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any pupils who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period

of not less than 10 school days education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged pupils from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Child Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Child Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Removing a pupil from the school roll is a very important decision. Pupils who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties.

Pupils with EHCPs may not be removed from roll without the consent of the Local Authority (SENAR). Pupils in care or pupils with Pupil Protection or Pupil in Need Plans should not be removed from roll until discussions have taken place with Children in Care Education Services (CiCES) and the pupil's social worker.

In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the statutory guidance to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Child Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the pupil jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

Part time timetable

In **very exceptional circumstances** there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs to help them return to full time education. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution and must have a time limit with a date by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or receive alternative provision.

See appendix (ii) for Derbyshire [Recording Part-Time Timetables – September 2021 Update](#)

Registers

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

Every half a day of absence from school has to be classified as either authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the Headteacher has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences, including persistent lateness, must be treated as unauthorised.

School complies with and uses the DfE compulsory national attendance codes to categorise absence (Appendix i)

Use of Attendance data

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DfE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are then published by the DfE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you/them from their previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

INTEGRIS FLOWCHART (see next page)

*Messages from home detailed – Initials of who has recorded. Who spoken to at home. Reason for absence/when will return/

*Detailed information of reason.

*Contact AS/JA/JW for code if need clarification.

*Contact JA/SS if vulnerable pupil and no reason given/ unsure of reason. JA/SS to contact SW if needed.

*Weekly code check by SA and discussion with AS for any concerns.

All late arrivals recorded on Integris in order to complete the morning register by 9.30 a.m.



All messages regarding pupil absence entered into Integris



First day calling completed for all pupils where reason unknown
Second and Third Day calling completed where no reason known/inadequate reason

Vulnerable list pupils identified and flagged up with SLT/FSW

Any issues arising from absence calling such as concerning explanations flagged with SLT/FSW



Letters generated and posted where unable to make contact with primary or secondary contact.



Cases identified for discussion / referral to SLT and family support worker
No response to home visits / pupils whereabouts unknown will trigger referral to police for safe and well check

Appendix (i)

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
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments. Physical or Mental).	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
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial 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

KEY

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

Appendix (ii)

Recording Part-Time Timetables – September 2021 Update

General Information

Background

There is evidence from a range of sources that those who do not attend school or similar provision full-time are at risk not only of social and educational failure but also of physical, emotional and psychological harm.

- *Protection of Children England – A Progress Report 2009*
- *Children missing out on education 2013 (Ofsted)*
- *Not present, what Future? Children Missing Education in England 2014 (NCB)*
- *The Sexual Exploiting of Children: It Couldn't Happen Here, Could It? 2014 (Ofsted)*
- *Children missing education – statutory guidance 2015 (DfE)*

Current Situation

All pupils are entitled to suitable full-time education and every effort must be made to avoid part time timetables.

The Equalities Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil:

- in relation to admissions,
- in the way it provides education for pupils,
- in the way it provides pupils access to any benefit, facility or service, or
- by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

This means that schools must make every effort to provide a full-time education for all pupils and young people.

Where a pupil has been placed on a part-time timetable, the Local Authority needs to consider whether the provision arranged is sufficient to meet this duty. Other considerations may include the duration of the strategy and any representations from parents or other professionals involved with the family.

Every effort should be made to avoid part time timetables and no young person with SEND or a CIC should have a part-time timetable unless it is truly exceptional. For example, a young person with an EHCP should have an emergency annual review before considering a part time timetable and a pupil in care should have their PEP reviewed.

Only in exceptional circumstances, can part-time timetables play a time limited role in education settings for some pupils where they are used sparingly and to support educational needs. However, their use is inappropriate without parental/carer consent, for indeterminate periods of time and without multi-agency input. This raises safeguarding issues for all pupils, particularly those already known to Social Care. It also means that pupils do not receive their entitlement to a full-time education.

Safeguarding

Section 157 & 175 of the Education Act 2001, places a duty on Local Authorities and schools to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils who are pupils at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age attending Further Education institutions. The same duty applies to independent schools. Schools must have regard and consideration for safeguarding issues and the impact these might have on a pupil when considering a reduced timetable.

Current DfE and Ofsted Guidance

The DfE is clear that part-time timetables should not be treated as a long-term plan. The DfE also expects a reduced timetable to be managed through a robust multi-agency plan. This must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time or to receive alternative provision.

Recent revisions made by Ofsted to the Single Inspection framework highlight an additional emphasis on pupils who are missing from education. Inspections will have a sharp focus on the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils missing from education.

The Sexual Exploiting of Children: It Couldn't Happen Here, Could It? (Ofsted 2014) states: 'The dangers that pupils and young people are exposed to when they are missing from education, home, or care cannot be underestimated. For school and Local Authority staff, planning, careful reviewing, and robust monitoring of pupils on part-time timetables are critical.'

Ofsted takes the view that there is an obligation all schools to notify the local authority of any part-time education arrangements. This includes schools maintained by the Local Authorities, Academies, Free Schools and Independent Schools.

School Attendance

In **very exceptional circumstances** there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs to help them return to full time education. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration

package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution and must have a time limit with a date by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or receive alternative provision. This must be put in place with the agreement of parents and for young people beyond the age of 14, should involve the young person. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as an authorised absence.

Recommended Practice

Best practice with part-time timetables is to initially identify the needs using a multi-agency approach. It is important that parents and pupil/young people are involved in the process from the very outset. A part-time table **must** have the consent of the parents/carers.

The rationale, arrangements, targets, strategies and planned end date should be set out in a multi-agency plan such as a Multi Element Plan (MEP), Early Help Assessment or Personal Education Plan (PEP). Multi-agency plans which include part-time provision should be designed for a limited period of time and must be reviewed regularly during that period. All part-time timetables must take account of safeguarding issues for all pupils and in particular, safeguarding risks identified through a Child Protection Plan or for Child in Need processes. Therefore prior to the part time timetable being instigated it is essential that it is embedded in advice from at least one agency and multi-agency plan.

Children in Care

As Corporate Parents, Derbyshire County Council requires that all pupils in care receive a full-time education. Any short term and time limited alterations to this should first be discussed with the pupil's social worker and Virtual School Head (or a named representative) before progressing with altering a child in care's provision.

Pupils with EHCPs

In line with advice outlined above about multi agency plans being at the core of the decision to proceed with a part time timetable Derbyshire County Council has an expectation that pupils with EHCPs should have an interim review of their plan prior to a part-time timetable commencing. As for all pupils, should a part-time timetable be agreed at this review, it should be time limited with an end date by which full time attendance is expected.

Any plans to alter a pupil's provision who has an EHCP should firstly be discussed with the pupil parents or carers in addition to all of the agencies involved with the

pupil's education and health care plan. This is a legal document which places duties on schools and stakeholders.

Defining part-time timetables

For recording purposes, a part-time timetable is calculated as the total number of hours educational provision, under the statutory 25 hours educational entitlement. The total number of hours of education/provision across a range of educational is important. If a young person is attending the school site part time but the ***reminder of their full-time entitlement*** is being provided in alternative provision, i.e. another school, college, support centre, Tailor Made Programme then a part-time timetable form does not need to be completed. However, if the ***combination*** of educational provision is less than 25 hours in total then a part-time timetable form will need to be completed.

Where Reception aged pupils (even those under 5 years old) have started school and subsequently attend part-time, a part-time timetable form will need to be completed, since once a pupil starts school they have a statutory rights to full-time education.

For pupils that are supported on a full Out of School Tuition package there is no requirement for a part-time timetable form to be completed. There is no requirement to complete a notification form for pupils that have agreed flexi-schooling arrangements as long as, the total number of hours offered is full-time.

Administrative Guidance for Recording and Monitoring

All schools will need to complete the electronic part-time timetable form for each pupil who meets the part-time criteria by accessing the following link to the part time timetable [Notification Form](#). Please note this now includes a requirement to record a review date and a proposed return to full-time education date.

The following **Update Form** needs to be completed to include a return to full-time education date and where there are amendments to the number of hours that a pupil is on a part-time timetable. If a part-time timetable ends then please complete the [Closure Form](#) so that our records can be updated. Where a pupil returns to full-time education, changes/leaves school, or is permanently excluded a closure form will need to be completed and the local authority informed. Alternatively, where appropriate, the local authority requests that schools complete the following [Nil Return Form](#) at the end of each Derbyshire term, to confirm that the school has not got any pupils on a part-time timetable, or that there are no changes to existing part-time timetables.

The Authority will contact you if there are any queries or clarification needed to information submitted and also to review the length of time a pupil is on a part-time timetable.

General Attendance recording Advice

For statutory school aged pupils 'C' will be automatically recorded as the pupil's attendance code for each session they are not expected to attend.

For non-statutory school aged pupils 'X' will be automatically recorded as the pupil's attendance code for each session they are not expected to attend.

Contacts

Please address queries regarding the part-time timetables guidance to the following email: CS.inclusionteam@derbyshire.gov.uk

Alternatively, if there are technically queries associated with the completion and uploading of the forms please email: CS.informationenquiries@derbyshire.gov.uk



Attendance Policy

Version	Reviewed in School	Approved by GB/SLT/HT/IG	Ratified at LGB	Minute Number
1 – Date Approved	-	-	2012	-
1	-	-	16.10.2017	23.6
1	08.02.2021	06.03.2021	22.03.2021	12.3
2	01.12.2021	01.12.2021	06.12.2021	15.1
3	12.10.22	SLT – 17.10.22	NA	NA
3.1	29.10.23	SLT 06.11.23	NA	NA
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