

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

<b>Statutory or non-statutory</b>	Non - statutory
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Full Governing Body
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### **Contents**

<b>Section</b>		<b>Page number</b>
1	Aims	1
2	Legislation and Guidance	2
3	Roles and Responsibilities	2
4	Recording Attendance	4
5	Authorised and Unauthorized Absence	6
6	Strategies for Promoting Attendance	7
7	Attendance Monitoring	7
8	Monitoring Arrangements	8
9	Links with other Policies	8
10	Appendix 1: Attendance Codes	9

### **1. Aims**

At Branfil Primary School 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 lessons.

## 2. 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.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 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

### 3.2 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

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance
- Working with the education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Mrs Debbie Taylor who can be contacted by telephone on 01708 225186 or by emailing: [attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk).

### 3.5 Class teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

### 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

### 3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time. Our gates open between 8:40-8:50am. Any children arriving after the gate closes, must enter through the office where the child will be signed into the late book and the parent/carer will be required to give an explanation for the lateness.
- Collect their child on time each day. Reception pupils should be collected at 3:10pm; years 1, 2 and 3 at 3:15pm; and years 4, 5 and 6 at 3:20pm.
- Call the school to report their child's absence and press option 1 if they wish to leave a message or email: [attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk) by 8:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. They are also expected to advise when the child is expected to return to school (when applicable).
- 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 school hours. If it is not possible to arrange a medical appointment, including doctors, dentist, opticians or hospital appointments, outside the school day, they should send a copy of the appointment by text or email to: [attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk). This is necessary in order for the absence to be authorised.

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 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 first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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.
- 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.
- Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day. Any arrivals after this time will be recorded as late up to 30 minutes. After 30 minutes the register is officially closed and any arrivals will receive a mark indicating that the child arrived after registration closed.

### 4.2 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 and each subsequent day of absence, by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office and pressing option 1 if they wish to leave a message or by emailing: [attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk).
- 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.

### 4.3 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 and provides evidence of the 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 school will not authorise a holiday or trip taken in term time. Any unauthorised holidays may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice. A leave of absence form must be completed. A form can either be requested at the school office or by emailing: [attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk). If a child is absent on the days **before** or **after** a half term holiday, medical evidence may be requested.
- 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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### 4.4 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 absent, using the appropriate code.
- You will be notified by letter if your child's punctuality causes concern. You will receive a copy of your child's minute late report with the letter.

### 4.5 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. An email will also be sent. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, and there is a cause for concern, the school may make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Social Care MASH, the CME Child Missing in Education or possibly the police.
- 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.

### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

You will be informed of your child's attendance in the following ways:

- Your child will receive an attendance certificate every term for attendance over 97%.
- Your child's teacher will discuss attendance with you in the autumn and spring term in the All About Your Child Meetings.
- In your child's annual written report in the summer term.

- The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels if they become a concern by an attendance letter from the headteacher. The Education Welfare Officer will become involved if your child's attendance does not improve.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

- Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents or carers. The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' (this does not include family holidays, weddings or birthdays). A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.
- 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, before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office or by emailing: [attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@branfil.havering.sch.uk). The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carer's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

We strive to promote high attendance and punctuality. Every Friday, during Celebration Assembly, the class with the best attendance and punctuality is awarded the Attendance Cup. To help promote attendance throughout the school all children receive a certificate of attendance if they maintained an attendance of 97% and above during a term. The Government guidelines are that children are expected to have no less than 96% attendance. Children who have 100% attendance across the whole academic year receive a badge and certificate.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

Every month the attendance officer meets with the Education Welfare Officer where pupil's attendances are analysed. Any pupils whose attendance falls below 90% are identified. If there are any attendance or punctuality concerns, the parents/carers will be informed by letter from the headteacher or from the Education Welfare Officer. Pupils are invited to meet with the headteacher if they would find it helpful.

The attendance and absence data is analysed 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.

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly 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
- The Governors will receive a termly report on attendance and punctuality

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.

### **7.2 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

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

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, 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

#### **7.4 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
- Refer any persistent unauthorised absences to the Education Welfare Office
- Send letters to parents/carers of pupils whose attendance falls below 90%.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or 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

### **8. 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 full governing board.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Missing in Education
- Havering Attendance Policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<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