



Bracken Hill School

Attendance Policy

Author: Mrs Jefferies

Policy Type: Whole School

This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure compliance with current regulations

The Governors of the school recognise that all staff play a vital role in the achievement of high standards and in providing our pupils with the best opportunities matched to their needs.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations regarding school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. Our aims include:

- 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 support attendance.
- Ensuring compliance with the **latest DfE guidance on attendance**, including daily data sharing with the DfE and local authorities.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. It is also based on the following legislation:

- [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 subsequent amendments
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy aligns with the 2024 update requiring all schools to share daily attendance registers with the DfE and local authorities.

For more information, refer to:

- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)
- [Parental Responsibility Measures for Behaviour and Attendance](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Ensuring 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 accountable for implementing this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitoring the impact of attendance strategies.
- Referring cases for external support where needed, such as Early Help intervention.
- Ensuring the school meets its obligation to share daily attendance data with the DfE and local authorities.

3.3 The Designated Senior Leader for Attendance

The designated senior leader for attendance is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas for improvement.
- Providing attendance reports to staff and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Working with external agencies to tackle persistent absence.
- Implementing DfE recommendations for reducing persistent and severe absence.
- Supporting teachers in discussing attendance issues with parents.
- Delivering targeted interventions for pupils and families.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Kelly Jefferies** and can be contacted via office@brackenhill.notts.sch.uk.

3.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance via the Arbor system, using the correct codes, and submitting this information by 9:20am and 1:30pm.
- Engaging with pupils and parents to support good attendance.

3.5 School Admin Staff

Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absences and record them in the school system.
- Transfer calls to class teachers or phase leaders when necessary.

3.6 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and on time.
- Notify the school **before 9am** on the day of an absence via phone or Seesaw.
- Provide at least **two emergency contact numbers**.
- Arrange appointments outside school hours where possible.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school every day and on time.

4. Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance Register

The school follows DfE-mandated attendance reporting. We will take our attendance register during registration times in the morning and afternoon.

The attendance register will record whether a pupil is:

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

The school will share attendance data daily with the DfE and local authorities.

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made 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 9am on each school day. The register for the morning will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.20 am. The register for the afternoon will be taken at 1.10pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

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 by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff or sending a seesaw message.

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 by phone or seesaw message.

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. 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

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:

- Day 1: 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, a follow-up text/email will be sent.
- Day 2: Make a second phone call to the parent/carer. If no response is received, a letter home will be issued.
- Day 3: If there has still been no contact, the school will conduct a home visit or request advice from an agency such as social care or Early Help.
- 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 beyond three days with no contact, the school will consider escalating to the Children Missing in Education Team or social services.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at parents' evenings, annual reviews and via the end of year report as a minimum. If there are concerns it will be discussed more frequently.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by the parent, an absence will be unauthorised, e.g. if a child refuses to attend.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the school, even if the absence is supported by the parent.

5.2 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unique, one-off situations that are unavoidable and beyond the family's control, where attending school would not be in the best interest of the child.

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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Head Teacher 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 belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' 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

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school and 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 £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head Teacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- 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.

5.4 National framework for penalty notices

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which

there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If a child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offer of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The school has implemented the following incentives to promote good attendance:

- The class with the highest attendance for the week, along with pupils achieving 100% attendance for the half term, is celebrated on the attendance notice board.
- 100% attendance is recognised each half term with a certificate, sticker, and a message to parents. Additionally:
 - Pupils achieving 100% attendance for a full term receive a prize.
 - Pupils achieving 100% attendance for the full year receive a special prize.
- Attendance data is regularly analysed to identify trends and allow for early intervention where necessary.

7. Attendance Monitoring

Bracken Hill aims for a whole-school attendance target of at least 95%, in line with DfE expectations. However, the school acknowledges that reasonable adjustments may be needed for pupils with SEND, complex medical needs, or other exceptional circumstances.

School attendance figures will be analysed half-termly. However, for individual pupils who are not attending regularly, earlier and more dynamic interventions will be implemented as necessary.

Pupils falling below 90% attendance will be closely monitored. This information will be shared with parents/carers, and proactive support strategies will be outlined.

The attendance targets at Bracken Hill reflect the SEN needs of the pupil population and the complex medical, emotional, and behavioural factors that impact attendance. The school is committed to intervening rigorously but pragmatically, considering environmental, social, and physiological factors affecting attendance.

Non-attendance is regarded as a barrier to engagement and will be challenged robustly using a range of strategies tailored to individual pupils. Consideration will be given to timetabling and adjustments where there is regular non-attendance on specific days or sessions. Additionally, after a period of absence, some pupils (especially, but not exclusively, those with ASD) may require additional support to facilitate their reintegration into school, particularly after holidays when routines or class groups may have changed.

7.1 Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly at both whole-school and individual pupil levels.
- Identify specific groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern.

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

7.2 Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts requiring additional support and use this analysis to provide targeted interventions for pupils and families.
- Examine historical and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and develop strategies to address them.

7.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and school leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of attendance interventions, modifying strategies as needed to ensure effectiveness.

7.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is defined as a pupil missing **10% or more** of school, while **severe absence** refers to a pupil missing **50% or more** of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to identify patterns and trends in persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with parents of pupils who are identified as vulnerable or persistently/severely absent, in collaboration with the local authority where necessary.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove barriers to attendance.
- Individualised timetables where necessary.

- Refer cases to Early Help for additional support.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years or when DfE guidance is updated, by Kelly Jefferies and approved by the Governing Body.

9. Links with Other Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Appendix 1: School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (e.g. holidays, insets and polling station days)

Appendix 2: Attendance Procedures

My child is absent from, or late into school

Contact: Parents/carers must contact school on first day of absence. If no contact is made, a phone call to families will be made.
Regular phone calls for updates until the child returns to school. Contact with parents/carers will be made via Seesaw if there is no answer on the phone. Home visit will be made if no contact is made with school.

If attendance is over 90% no further action.

Action 2: If attendance drops below 90%, pupils will be identified by the Attendance Team and the reasons why to be explored with class team and parents/carers.

Action 3: Pupils with attendance below 90% will be monitored by the attendance team and parents/carers will receive an update regarding attendance (either a concern letter or improvement letter).

Action 4: If attendance does not improve through graduated support, a cause for concern may be logged and parents/carers will be invited to a meeting. This may include a referral to other agencies to offer additional support to parents/carers.

Is your child persistently late or absent?

Persistently late

Absent

If your child is persistently late (at least 10 sessions of unauthorised late arrival over a period of 12 weeks, excluding holidays), this may result in a penalty notice being issued.

Is the absence in one block?

The absence is not authorised by the Headteacher or the absence is longer than the period authorised.
This may result in a penalty notice being issued or the absence issue being escalated to outside agencies.

The child is persistently absent. This means at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence over a period of 12 school weeks, excluding holidays. These absences do not need to be consecutive.

Notices to improve will also be the final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued.

- Fines will be £80 per parent if paid within 21 days. £160 before 28 days.
- Seek an Education Supervision Order from the family court
- Prosecution