

Baginton Fields School

Policy for Student Attendance



"Dedicated to delivering inspirational learning experiences"

Reviewed by:	Alison Francis	Date: September 2022
Approved by:	Governing Board	Date: September 2023
Last reviewed on:	September 2021	
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Aims:

At Baginton Fields School we value the attendance of all pupils and are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance,

There is a strong relationship between good school attendance and achieving positive outcomes for children. It is recognised that attending school regularly can be a protective factor for children and young people. It is important that as a school we offer a safe environment, positive relationships, high quality teaching and learning opportunities to develop social and emotional skills.

Ensuring that children attend school every day will help achieve this ambition by maximising their education and social achievements as well as developing self-discipline, organisation and preparedness for the work environment. Improving attendance and reducing absence, especially persistent absence is a priority for our school and Coventry City Council.

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences.
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child

ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled. and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

A “Parent” is defined as:

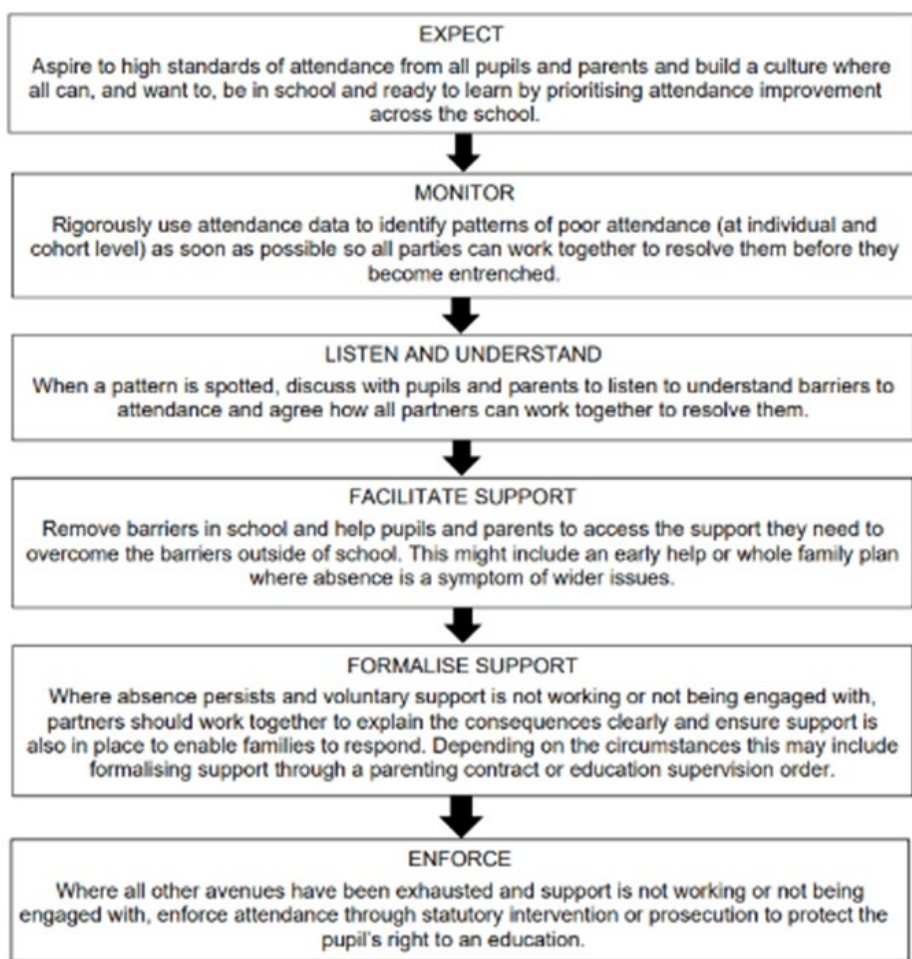
- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

Rationale:

- At Baginton Fields the staff and governing body are committed to providing high quality education to all students.
- To ensure all students succeed and achieve to their full potential excellent attendance is crucial.
- All absences from school disrupts learning and will impact negatively on the life chances of all students.
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Our school attendance policy:

- Is clear and consistently applied, transparent and fair
- Considers the individual needs of pupils and their families
- Is easy to find so that the whole school community is aware of our attendance expectations
- Includes the contact details of key staff to make it easy for parents to get in touch
- Is followed in accordance with the procedures in the flowchart below



Context:

This Student Attendance Policy relates to the students attending Baginton Fields School. Reference is made to amendments made to the 2006 attendance regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 regarding term time holiday that came into force on 1st September 2013.

The school admits students with severe and complex special educational needs. Students' learning is influenced by such factors as autism, challenging behaviours, communication difficulties, physical disabilities and medical conditions. These factors can also influence continuity of attendance.

Additional considerations regarding attendance must also be considered when reading this policy:

- The majority of students attending the school are provided with escorted home / school transport from Coventry Education Authority.
- Students do not leave the school premises during the lunchtime period.

- There is close contact between home and the school.
- The school Parent Support Advisor, Sharon Evans, will work with parents to encourage consistent attendance.
- A number of “Looked After” students are accommodated by the Local Authority in residential placements in surrounding districts and are required to travel.
- Students who attend the school may suffer acute and ongoing health issues that influence their ability to attend.
- A minority of students present significant challenging behaviours that may impact on the capacity of families to encourage attendance.

Medical Absence:

A number of students attending the school have complex and chronic medical conditions. It is not uncommon for some students to be unwell and unable to attend school. Students may also be admitted to hospital for treatment or as a result of illness/infection. There is a small percentage of students who are recorded as suffering epileptic seizures and occasionally require hospital admission in response to seizure activity.

All absences relating to medical conditions / hospital and health appointments should be supported by an appointment card / letter for scheduled appointments / admissions. Such medical absences will be recorded as **Authorised**.

However, it is important that Heads of Key Stage are aware of the length of time students are absent from school for medical reasons. Heads of Key Stage will:

- Maintain regular contact with the family to ascertain the time scale and condition of the student involved
- Make sensitive home visits to gain a personal insight into the condition of the student.
- Provide home learning where appropriate and encourage families to support the student complete this. Provide support required to do this
- Liaise with the appropriate professionals e.g. Physiotherapist who may have more regular contact with the family to accrue up to date information.

Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Lead	Alison Francis	alisonf@bagintonfields.coventry.sch.uk
Attendance Officer	Andrew Watson	andrew.watson@coventry.gov.uk
Named Governor/Trustee for Attendance	Helen Fox-Williams	helen.fox-williams@coventry.gov.uk

Role of 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
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher:

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the attendance policy is implemented
- 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, these may be issued in the case of an unauthorised holiday being taken during term time.**

The Headteacher will:

- Call parents/carers to discuss attendance
- Send attendance letters as appropriate
- Meet with parent/carers where there is a persistent concern
- Meet regularly with the LAAO
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

Role of the DSL:

- Intensify support through statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

The role of the Senior Leadership Team:

The Senior leadership team are responsible for:

- Monitoring & ensuring attendance is discussed weekly at SLT meetings and that any student who is a cause for concern is raised
- Collectively leading on attendance across the school but take responsibility for their Key Stage
- 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
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

- Where attendance is a concern and a social worker is involved, school will alert them to the issue as soon as possible
- School will inform the allocated social worker of any unexplained absence.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support access to any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners and where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

Role of Parent Support Advisor:

- Will contact parents as required by the Senior Leadership team and see what support school can offer
- Liaise with Early Help or the Children's Disability Team if necessary.
- Liaise with the LAAO under advice from the Headteacher.

Role of class teachers:

- Responsible for ensuring registers are taken via StudyBugs and returned promptly
- Encourage good attendance
- Be alert to factors that might have a negative impact on attendance and discuss these with Head of Key Stage
- Be vigilant for patterns of poor attendance and share these with the Head of Key Stage.

Role of administrator:

- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Text parents/carers of pupils on the first day of absence
- If no response, they will telephone
- Record absences on daily absence register to alert senior leaders
- Contact members of staff who fail to have taken their registers
- Record authorised and agreed absences in registers using the correct attendance codes
- Amend registers as required

Role of parents/carers:

- Ensure their daughter/son attends school every day
- In the event of a student being absent parent / carers are required to inform the school via **Studybugs** or by phone/email before 9.00am on the first day of absence. Such messages will constitute the absence being regarded as **Authorised** provided the Headteacher is satisfied with the reason given for absence

- 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
- In the case of sickness parents/carers should alert school on each subsequent day of absence and indicate the expected return date
- Parents/carers will alert school in advance of a medical appointment.
- Parents/carers will share with school a copy of any appointment letter/test message/email that will require their child to miss school
- Should the parent / carer fail to inform the school of the reason for absence then the absence will be regarded as **Unauthorised**
- Parents/carers will ensure that any non- urgent medical/dentist appointment is made outside the school day
- Where this is not possible students should be out of school for the minimum time possible, a whole day absent for a dentist/doctors appointment will be partially unauthorised i.e. if the appointment is in the morning and the student does not attend in the afternoon that session will be unauthorised unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Parent/carers will alert school to any issues that affect attendance as soon as possible and work with school/other professionals to resolve these
- Those parent/carers who bring their child to school will ensure they arrive punctually for 9.00 am and 3.20 pm to collect them. The personal transport budget may be withdrawn if families do not adhere to this contract.

Role of the LAAO (Local Authority Attendance Officer)

- The LAAO will meet termly with the Headteacher to provide advice and guidance around attendance issues.
- The LAAO will involve the Early Help coordinators as appropriate

School may consider:

- Letters home
- Meeting with parent/carer in school
- Home visits
- Pastoral support
- Mentoring/counselling
- Reduced timetable to enable reintegration
- SEN Support (including SEMH&L)
- Extended School Non-Attendance Advisory Panel (ESNAAP)
- Social Care/ Supporting Families teams (Children's Service)

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Pupils who have attendance below 80% may require multi-agency support.

When all attempts to engage with the pupil and family have failed the LAAO can discuss with legal intervention. Schools will be asked to complete the Attendance Intervention form with attached evidence that everything has been done to support the pupil in improving their attendance at school.

If the LAAO is satisfied that the criteria have been met for legal intervention, they will support the school to complete one of the following.

- Parenting Contract
- Attendance Prosecution
 - School Attendance Order (only used where a pupil is not on a school roll)
 - Section 444(1) or 444(1A)
 - Section 444 and 444ZA
- Parenting Order

Monitoring Attendance:

Class teams are provided with attendance data on a termly basis to determine intervention strategies where needed. These are revisited termly.

Interventions for students are personalised according to need.

Attendance is a weekly discussion for SLT where students of concern are discussed.

Bromcom and StudyBugs provide both individual, class and whole school data and identifies those who are persistent absentees.

Where appropriate school will engage with the attendance team at the Local Authority.

Request for leave of absence during term time:

Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Baginton Fields School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence in term time unless there are EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

What does this mean for parents / carers of children attending Baginton Fields?

- *Leave of absence will not be granted other than for EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.*
- *“EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES” would not ordinarily include holidays in term time.*
- *The headteacher will decide if a request for leave of absence is reasonable and each request will be judged on a case by case basis.*

- *The headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.*
- *Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority by the headteacher and be issued with a fixed penalty notice.*
- *Authorised Leave of Absence will be recorded in the register as an "Authorised Absence"*

How do parents/ carers apply for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances?

A Leave of Absence request form is available from school.

Please contact the School Office on 02476 303854 or
admin@bagintonfields.coventry.sch.uk

The form may also be found on the school website: www.bagintonfields.coventry.sch.uk

What happens if a child is taken out of school without permission: permission is refused or the child does not return to school by the agreed date?

Legal sanctions:

The school or 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.

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

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.

How does the headteacher decide to grant a Leave of Absence request?

The following factors will be taken into account:

- Reason for the request. The headteacher will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request
- Length of leave of absence.
- Student attendance history.
- Potential impact on the child's education.
- Timing of request.

Reducing persistent and severe absence:

Students attending Baginton Fields are generally enthusiastic about attending school.

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
- Any student who is identified as a persistent absentee will be issued with a letter with the family offered support
- Hold regular meetings with the parents 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

Parents are contacted either by letter, home visit or by invitation to an attendance meeting involving all relevant agencies, when strategies for improvement are put in place.

To support regular attendance school will follow the Local Authority staged approach as detailed in School Attendance Matters.

Stage 1: Prevention

Criteria: Attendance is between 91% and 100%

Pupils who have attendance between 91% and 100% will receive support from school and other universal services they may be accessing i.e., GP

Stage 2: Early Intervention

Criteria: Attendance is between 81% and 90%

Pupils who have attendance between 81% and 90% may require support from other services outside of school and universal services at stage 1.

Stage 3: Targeted Support

Criteria: Attendance is below 80%

Pupils who have attendance below 80% may require multi-agency support in addition to that provided at stage 2.

Removal from roll.

A student could be removed from the school roll if they fail to return within 10 days of the agreed return date or after 20 days of unauthorised absence if leave of absence has not been agreed.

In the event of school transfer or a pupil moving to another area, a pupil will normally remain on roll until notification is received from a receiving school. Should no notification be received the school will make every effort to locate the pupil in conjunction with the Children and Families Service and SEN Management Services. If unsuccessful, a missing person form must be completed and sent to the Local Authority and the pupil removed from roll after four weeks.

Home school transport:

Is provided by Coventry Local Authority and, to some extent, dictates the time students arrive for school. All contractors are fully aware that students should be in school for a 9am start.

A number of parents now receive a Personal Transport Budget. They choose to transport their child to, and from, school. All such parents are required to ensure their child arrives before 9am and is collected 3.20pm. The LA can withdraw the budget if parents do not adhere to their contract.

Strategies for promoting attendance:

The school will look for every opportunity to raise the profile of the importance of good attendance with pupils, parents and carers.

Within our school setting the reason for poor attendance is often individual to the student, as such we will look to implement personalised interventions to support improvement.

Associated policies:

- Home school agreement
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Managing Student Behaviour
- Supporting students at Baginton Fields School with medical conditions
- Admissions
- Anti-Bullying

Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, (September 2022)

- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015)
- Children missing education, DfE (September 2016)
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (September 2022)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (July 2018)

Baginton Fields School
Request for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances.

Dear Parent / Carer,

Leave of absence in term time cannot be granted unless there are EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

- The headteacher will decide if a request for leave of absence is reasonable and each request will be judged on a case by case basis.
- The headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.
- Where leave of absence are taken without permission of the school; or the headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs; or the child has not returned to school by the agreed date without a satisfactory explanation, parents/carers can be given a Penalty Notice.

Alison Francis. Headteacher.

To be completed by Parents / Carers.		
Childs name:		Class Group:
Home address:		
Reason for request:		
Dates of leave requested:	From:	To:
Name of parent / carer:		Signature:

Office use:		
Child:	Class:	Current attendance:
Decision:		
In this instance I am able to authorise this leave of absence request for the above period		
Further information required. Please contact school		
This request is not authorised because:		
Your child's attendance is below the recommended government guidelines (95%)		
Your child has already taken leave of absence this academic year.		
The new school year has only just started.		
Absence from school will have a detrimental effect on your child's learning.		
The reason for your request is not acceptable		
School can not sanction holidays in term time		

Signed, Headteacher Date