

Brownsover Community School



Attendance Policy

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Prepared By	Elisa Basnett
Acknowledgement(s)	All staff
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Document Information

Document history

Version no.	Date	Change
1.6	June 2019	Registration procedures & system updated. Update of contact systems
1.7	June 2021	Addition of temporary COVID measures
1.8	Jan 2023	Procedures, aims & processes updated in line with new attendance legislation. Sept 23 – school start time amended to 8.45am & update from ACE to WAS
1.9	Sept 2024	Updated in line with new attendance legislation August 2024

Approvals

Role	Name	Signature / Approval	Date
Headteacher	E. Basnett	yes	Sept 24
Governors - Full Governing Body		yes	October 2024

Reviewers

Role	Name
Headteacher	Elisa Basnett
SLT	Helen Westerby
Governors	

Distribution for Information

Role	Name

Brownsover Community School

Attendance Policy 2024-26

'Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.' - DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance

1. Aims

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 (90% and below) and severe absence (50% and below)
- Ensuring every child 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 children 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 DfE's statutory guidance [working together to improve school attendance](#), and refers to the [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](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

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

An attendance report is presented on a termly basis to the governing board by the headteacher.

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 children
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The school has an attendance support team which includes the headteacher, deputy headteacher, admin support and Pupil Support worker. This team meets on a half-termly basis to monitor attendance.

3.3 The attendance support team

The attendance support team are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with children and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to children and families
- Working with the Education Casework Officers from Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) to tackle persistent and severe absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Elisa Basnett, supported by the Pupil Support Worker – Kirsty Tite. The attendance support team can be contacted by emailing admin2616@welearn365.com

Each term, the attendance support team meets with our allocated Education Casework Officer, from Warwickshire Attendance Service.

3.4 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.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin 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 a member of the attendance support team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and on each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- 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 the school day

3.7 Children

Children 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 children onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the second session (immediately after lunch). It will mark whether every child 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
- 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 child is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a child is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

- Children must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The child'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 01788 547660 and either speaking directly to a member of the school admin team or leaving a message on the school absence line (see also section 7), alternatively email the school admin team on admin2616@welearn365.com

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for 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 child's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment by emailing the school admin team on O2 Attendance Policy – Brownsover Community School

admin2616@welearn365.com or by calling 01788 547660 and either speaking directly to a member of the school admin team or leaving a message on the school absence line. Parents/carers are expected to provide evidence of the medical/dental appointment in the form of an appointment card and/or an official letter. If evidence is not provided then any absence will be marked as unauthorised.

We encourage parents/carers – where possible - to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

We advise that if a child's sibling(s) are taken out of school unnecessarily due to medical/dental appointments, that are not for them, their absence will be marked as unauthorised.

The child'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

We are aware that persistent lateness can have a cumulative effect and deny full access to the National Curriculum.

A child 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 late for 30 minutes, using the appropriate code

Class teachers and the attendance support team monitor punctuality on a daily basis and speak to parents/carers where necessary.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the child's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- 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
- Contact 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 making a home visit, involving Children and Families Front Door and/or contacting the police.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance. On a termly basis, the school will communicate with all parents where their child/children's attendance falls into one of the following categories:

- The child's attendance is 90-91%. The attendance support team will send a letter to parents notifying them that their child's attendance is 'at risk' of falling below 90% and being classed as persistent absence.
- The child's attendance is below 90% and classed as 'persistent absence'. If the reasons for this persistent absence is unknown to the school or there is a sporadic pattern of absence, the attendance support team will send parents a letter and invite them to attend a meeting. A attendance support plan will be considered to overcome any barriers.

- The child's attendance is below 50% and classed as 'severely absent'. The attendance team will make direct contact with parents and a plan of support will be put in place.
- See Appendix 2 & 3 for further information about the schools Attendance Pathway and an example letter.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Parents/carers do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a child during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant and unavoidable'. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

'Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.' – DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** may include:

- Illness (including mental 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 child's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. Note that only one day of religious observation can be authorised, if a child is absent for subsequent days these may be unauthorised. A request must be made if you expect your child to be having more than one day absent from school due to religious observance.
- Traveller children 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 child is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. It is the school's responsibility to be fair and consistent when notifying the local authority about any absences that are unauthorised.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers 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 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 child 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

The school regularly promotes the benefits of good attendance in school newsletters and through other communication to parents/carers.

7. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors attendance on an ongoing basis. Any concerns regarding attendance are raised immediately with members of the attendance support team. The attendance support team meets on a half-termly basis to analyse attendance and absence data to identify children, families or cohorts that require support with their attendance. The school tailors the attendance support that it offers dependent on the context and needs of particular families or children.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual child level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Child-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.

It is the responsibility of school Governors to challenge and support the school regarding overall attendance, regular reports will be presented to this body. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided for them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as can be.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children 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 children 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 child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of children 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 three years by the headteacher and attendance team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board. **The date of the next scheduled review is September 2027**

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Attending the school	
/\	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
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 because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure

Appendix 2: Attendance Monitoring Process

Stage 1	Current attendance <u>below 96%</u> without clear authorised reasons for absence	
	Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter 1 outlining initial concern sent. • Class teacher or pupil support worker to have a conversation with parent/carer re: early concerns. • Attendance re-assessed after 6 weeks 	
Stage 2	Half termly (6 weekly) monitoring for identified stage 1 concerns	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If improved attendance, Letter 1a (positive increase) • Continue half termly monitoring and feedback until 96% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If on-going concerns, Letter 1b (little or no improvement) • Pupil Support Worker to make contact re: support needed • Attendance re-assessed after 6 weeks
Stage 3	Half termly (6 weekly) monitoring still shows little or no improvement	
	Actions: Letter 2 – meeting request sent Meeting with Headteacher &/or Pupil Support Worker to set targets and explore Early Help Referral. Attendance re-assessed after 6 weeks. If on-going concerns or insufficient improvement: Discuss referral to (Warwickshire Attendance Services (WAS)).	

<h1>Attendance Ladder</h1>		
<h3>How close is your child to 100%?</h3>		
0 days off school	100%	Perfection
Equates to 2 days off school each year	99%	Excellent
Equates to 5 days off school each year	97%	Good
Equates to 10 days off school each year	95%	Slight Concern
Equates to 20 days off school each year	90%	Concerned
Equates to 30 days off school each year	85%	Very Concerned
It's good to be green!!		

Appendix 3: Example Invite Letter to Attendance Support Meeting

Dear Parent/Carer

As a school, we have a legal responsibility to monitor absence and to work proactively with parents/carers to identify children who are at risk of poor attendance.

When attendance falls below 90% this is then classed as persistent absence and is monitored on an individual basis by ourselves in collaboration with Attendance officers from Warwickshire Local Authority. We have identified that your child's attendance **has fallen below this threshold**.

	Percentage	Days Absent
School expectation:	96%	6 days or less
Your child's attendance to date:		

I am sure that you are as concerned as we are about the potential effects your child's absence could have on their overall learning, and their ability to achieve their full potential.

As a school we are committed in supporting our children and families, using the Working Together to Improve School attendance as our guidance. Our Attendance Support Team are keen to work collaboratively with families to support punctuality and understand individual circumstances further. We would like to invite you to attend a supportive Attendance Improvement Meeting with members of the School Attendance Support Team. This meeting is part of a helpful process that provides an opportunity to discuss your child's progress and any support that may be required.

These meetings will be can be held virtually using Teams, or face to face. Please see details below for the meeting date and time. Please confirm your attendance by emailing tite.k@welearn365.com along with whether you would like a virtual meeting or face to face. If you require Teams, please do provide the appropriate email address to access the meeting. If you are unable to attend your allocated slot, please contact the attendance team to organise alternative arrangements.

Date:	
Time:	

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs E Basnett - Headteacher