

Pupil Attendance Policy



Approved by:	Governors	Date: February 2022
---------------------	-----------	----------------------------

Next review due by:	September 2025
----------------------------	----------------

Contents

1. Intent	2
2. Why good attendance matters	2
3. Policy Aims	3
4. Legislation and guidance	3
5. Implementation	3
6. Recording attendance	4
7. Authorised and unauthorised absence	6
8. Strategies for promoting attendance	9
9. Attendance monitoring	9
10. Monitoring arrangements	10
11. Links with other policies	11
Appendix 1: attendance codes	12

1. Intent

At Bourton Meadow Academy we nurture every child to fulfil their whole potential. Regular attendance at school is the best way we can ensure the children have full access to our curriculum and therefore have every opportunity to fulfil their whole potential.

The purpose of this policy is to promote good attendance through:

- Explaining what is good attendance and why it matters
- Outlining the process we follow to ensure attendance is good
- Detailing the steps we take when a child's attendance is a cause for concern
- Explaining how we monitor attendance.

2. Why good attendance matters

- We want every child to attend school for all 190 school days per year. This is the best way children maintain relationships with peers, feel part of the school community and learn our progressive and sequential curriculum.
 - We understand that there are times when children are too unwell to attend school. However, we encourage all parents to help us promote the school value of resilience and send their child into school on all days possible. If a parent is unsure whether their child is well enough to be in school, we would ask them to send their child to school and be safe in the knowledge that if their child presents as too unwell, we will contact them.
 - At Bourton Meadow we consider attendance of below 95% to be cause for concern and attendance of below 90% as persistent absenteeism.
 - Below is a table which illustrates how much learning is lost with attendance of 95% or below:
-

Attendance	Weeks Missed	Days Missed	Hours of School Missed
95%	2 weeks	10 days	68 hours
90%	4 Weeks	20 days	136 hours
85%	6 Weeks	30 days	204 hours
80%	8 Weeks	40 days	272 hours

3. Policy Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

4. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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.

5. Implementation

5.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

5.2 The headteacher - Lucy Berry

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence and punctuality data and reporting it to governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

5.3 The attendance officer (Sarah Harrison sharrison@bourtonmeadow.co.uk)

The school attendance officer

- Monitors attendance and punctuality data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance and punctuality to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence and lateness.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance and punctuality issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

5.4 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.

5.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and punctuality and record it on the school system.

6. Recording attendance

6.1 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
- 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 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 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 8.50am. The register for the second session will be taken 1pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm in Foundation 2 and Key Stage 1. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.20pm in Key Stage 2.

6.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). This can be done by emailing or ringing the school office on **01280 823374**

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.

6.3 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. This can be done by emailing or phoning the school office.

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 7.1** to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

6.4 Lateness and punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work and classes run early morning work for the first 15 minutes of the school day while registers are completed. If your child is late, they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information and cause disruption to the lesson for others. These are just a few reasons that could then lead to possible further absence.

Registration begins at 8:40 am and all pupils are expected to be in school by 8.50am.

A pupil who arrives late after the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

If a child arrives late to school, they must be signed into the main school office with the reasons for their lateness recorded clearly. The office staff will inform the attendance officer who will monitor lateness and punctuality of children and contact parents as required to agree steps to ensure the child attends school on time as often as possible. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good timekeeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies, if deemed necessary. If no alternative is available, the school will place a child into the after school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

6.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting the parents via telephone each day.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

First Day of Absence

If your child is absent you must:

Contact us before 8.50am on the first day of absence by telephone or email with an explanation of the absence. If you do not make contact with the school office and your child is absent, we will endeavour to contact you. If we have not made contact 10.30am, an attendance officer will visit your home address. If we cannot make contact with you in person at this time, we will consider this a safeguarding risk and will contact the police.

Third Day Absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence, the school is required to start 'child missing in education procedures'. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends and wider family. In circumstances of persistent absence, the Family Support Worker or Attendance Officer may visit the family home to try to establish contact.

Ten Days' Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number.

Persistent Absence

If your child misses 10% (3 weeks / 30 sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Where this absence is authorised, school will meet with parents / carers in order to ascertain any underlying medical reasons for the level of absence. The school may decide not to authorise any future absences without medical evidence.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 96%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly.

Children at Bourton Meadow Academy are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school and, whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

6.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents as part of the end of school summer report. Attendance will also be discussed at parent evenings.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

7.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

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
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative. Leave should only be authorized for this purpose when the headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is an exceptional circumstance.
- 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

Examples of where absence will **not be authorized** include:

- Family holiday (including where it is cheaper to book during term time)
- Shopping/day trip/visit to a theme park
- A birthday treat
- Oversleeping due to a late or bad night
- Looking after other children/other family members.

A penalty notice will be considered for absences due to unauthorized holidays. The school follow Buckinghamshire County's procedures for reporting unauthorized absences and irregular attendance. See section 7.3 Reducing persistent absence and 7.4 Legal Sanctions for more information.

7.2 Reducing persistent absence

A child will be described as a persistent absentee if they have attendance of 90% or below. This equates to 95 hours or more of missed schooling over the course of an academic year. This attendance figure is reported nationally and picked up through the local census information.

In order to promote high attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism, the school follows Buckinghamshire Council's attendance systems and procedures.

Attendance will be regularly monitored and pupils with low attendance will receive a letter informing parents their child's attendance will be closely monitored for the following three weeks. Where there is no improvement, the parents will be invited into school to complete a parent contract.

What is a parent contract?

A parent contract is an agreement between the parent or carer, and the school. It is not intended to be a punishment, rather, it should be viewed as a way for the school and parents/carers to work together to

improve their child's attendance, and an action plan for all to adhere to in order to improve the situation. This is a voluntary arrangement between the school and the parent or carer which provides an opportunity to put in support. If a parent or carer decides not to enter into a contract, they will need to try and find other ways of improving their child's attendance and will be asked how they intend to do this. In all instances, a refusal to sign a parenting contract or breach of parenting contract will be disclosed to the court.

If there is no marked improvement in the child's attendance after a review period has taken place, the school representative will refer this to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

If your child is absence starts to cause concern we will follow the steps outlined below.

Persistent Absence Concern Procedures

At BMA we track every child's attendance. When attendance falls below 90% children are added to a monitoring list.

Step 1

Child's attendance drops below 90%

You will receive an Attendance Matters letter highlighting your child's attendance and our intention to monitor for half a term.

Step 2

Child's attendance remains below 90%

You will receive a second letter highlighting your child's attendance and informing you that we will monitor for a further term. We will request a meeting with you in order to work together to improve your child's attendance.

Step 3

Child's attendance remains below 90%

You will receive a third letter inviting you to a formal Parent Contract Meeting where we will set targets to support you and your child to improve their attendance.

Step 4

Child's attendance remains below 90%

If attendance does not improve the school will contact the Local Authority Attendance Officer. The local authority have the power to prosecute parents for not ensuring that their children receive an appropriate education

7. 3 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.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

Bourton Meadow Academy work hard to promote high attendance throughout the school. We do this by:

- Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement.
- Ensuring there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Liaising closely with outside professionals to provide extra support when needed. (e.g. school nurse team, social workers, family resilience, young carers).
- Taking into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively.
- Understanding the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff.
- Engaging extra in-school pastoral support or emotional literacy support if needed.
- Celebrating high attendance in classes and assemblies.
- Link high attendance clearly with school values.
- Design (intent) and implement a whole school curriculum which engages pupil interest to encourage and ensure high attendance.

9. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). The parent/carer is expected to contact the school by phone or email each day their child is ill and not able to attend school.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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.

Bourton Meadow Academy collects and stores attendance data and uses it for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents are asked to give the Office Staff comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing. If children leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C (an authorised absence).

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national or international event or competition. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Impact

Bourton Meadow Academy recognises the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality and will continually evaluate the attendance trends within the school to ensure that children attain their potential and are fully prepared for the next stage of their education. It fully utilises its attendance strategy to evaluate attendance trends and to quickly react to any concerns.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum biannually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. 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.

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
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day