



BRICKHOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

PRINCIPLES

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at Brickhouse Primary School and establish positive life habits necessary for future success. They also minimise the risks of pupils conducting anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse. Regular attendance also encourages your child to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing on life skills, they will also inevitably miss out on essential learning and on events taking place such as school visits. Children's social skills are also enhanced by regular attendance.

The school displays a positive and proactive ethos that places high value on attendance and punctuality and values its partnership with parents/carers to promote good attendance. This policy advocates close working with all local Schools/Academies and aims to provide a cohesive approach to tackling attendance within Brickhouse, ensuring that every child matters.

AIMS

- to share the responsibility for promoting school attendance amongst everyone at Brickhouse Primary School and the broader school community;
- to develop and implement an effective attendance policy that touches all aspects of a school's life, and relates directly to the school's values, ethos and curriculum – staff particularly strive:
 - to encourage all pupils to reach their true potential and eventually become independent learners who value learning

with and from others, i.e. have a positive attitude to life-long learning;

- to value application, perseverance, initiative and independence of thought and action, as well as co-operative endeavours.
- this attendance policy and its implementation should encourage some pupils to attend school more regularly by the implementation of specific measures, e.g.
 - registering pupils accurately and efficiently;
 - setting attendance targets for individual pupils, the school and specific year groups (where applicable);
 - contacting parents the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
 - at least weekly monitoring pupil attendance and punctuality;
 - regularly reporting school attendance statistics to parents, LA and DFE as appropriate.
- to monitor and evaluate this policy and its implementation by, amongst other means, rigorously collecting and analysing data about attendance to check our progress against measurable outcomes, e.g. National and LA-level.

ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW

It is a legal obligation of all parents/guardians/carers to ensure their child attends regularly, by law all children of compulsory school age must get a proper full time education.

The 1996 Education Act states;

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable —

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise“

SECTION 1 - ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENTS

All children of compulsory school age (5-16) should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly. They should also ensure that they are fully aware of the schools attendance policy and adhere to it.

THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- To help fulfil parents important role in their child's education, and to be as informed as possible in any communications or discussions with teachers, parents are requested and encouraged, to the extent feasible:
- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- To ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.
- To attend meetings as required in relation to their child's attendance;

- To ensure they obtain an authorised 'leave of absence' for their child for all planned absences and attend the follow up meeting with the school and Governor for Attendance if requested.
- Early Years Parents: To sign, as a statement of commitment to the school, an Early Years Attendance Agreement at the child's point of entry to the school.

To discharge their agreed responsibilities parents should always:

- encourage good attendance making sure that their child goes to school regularly and arrives on time;
- take an interest in their child's schoolwork;
- make sure their child understands that the parents do not approve of unnecessary absence from school;
- support the school in its efforts to control inappropriate behaviour;
- inform the school on the first day of non-attendance;
- co-operate with the school staff to make sure their child overcomes his or her attendance problems and gets a proper education;
- discuss planned absences with the school and apply for permission well in advance, e.g. a wedding or other special occasions, etc.

Parents should not normally:

- expect the school to agree to shopping trips during school hours;
- take their own family holidays outside of the school holidays;
- take their own family holidays during test time;
- expect the school to agree to their child missing for family holidays, or submit two holiday requests in any one school year.

PUPILS

- Pupils are actively encouraged to attend school regularly and to arrive punctually at school and at the start of lessons after break.

- Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence, e.g. bullying, racism, etc.
- Pupils should use their best endeavours to pass on absence notes from parents to their class teacher and to pass school correspondence to their parents.
- Pupils must be encouraged to understand the importance of attending school and know that it is compulsory to attend school regularly.
- Pupils should all understand that only 'real' illnesses and very exceptional circumstances can be a reason for absence.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ATTENDANCE PROSECUTION OFFICER (APO)

The APO works collaboratively across school settings to implement the common **attendance** policy and procedures. Early warning of attendance problems should be referred directly to the **APO** following the three points of school contact with parents/ carers. Legal action will be a last resort and will only ensue following advice and preventative action from the **APO** and school.

Following referral to the Local Authority, a decision will be made in relation to possible course of action depending on the circumstances and family.

- School Attendance Orders – these enforce the parents' responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive suitable education and to ensure that the parent takes responsibility for making sure that their child attends regularly;
- Home Visit – a visit to the family by the APO to discuss issues surrounding non-attendance and/or lateness in an attempt to solve the problem. This discussion will also involve advice to parents around the legal obligations of parents to ensure good school attendance and possible consequences for non-compliance.
- Prosecution may be considered for further periods of poor attendance (again for reasons stated above) All referrals to the Local Authority will be made via the APO.

- 15 Day Notifications – to improve attendance, to be issued directly from Academy settings
- Parenting Orders (because of court action) - a legal requirement for a parent to undertake specific measures in order to improve the situation.
- Education Supervision Orders (because of court action) - this means that the court appoints a supervisor to help and give advice to the Parents and the child.
- Request from Local Authority for the parents/careers to be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (initial £60 fine for each adult per child, this will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days) this will be issued where irregular attendance includes unauthorised leave of absence.

LAs are responsible, by law, for making sure that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend their school regularly. The **Brickhouse Attendance Leader and the APO** will monitor school attendance and to help parents meet their responsibilities.

The Brickhouse Attendance Officer will be responsible for the attendance, in conjunction with the school, of all the pupils in the settings.

The Attendance Leader and Attendance Officer will check school registers regularly (at least every half term) to ensure that they are being completed in accordance with the schools/ learning community policy and to identify any patterns of absence, which have not already been notified. The Attendance Officer promptly follows up incidents where the Attendance Officer and/or Head Teacher have identified a possible attendance problem (pupils whose attendance is 90% or less even after school intervention)

The Attendance Manager and Attendance Officer work closely with the school and families to resolve attendance issues, arranging home visits where necessary. The key to success is an effective working relationship between our school and the learning community:

THE GOVERNING BODY

The governing body is legally responsible for many aspects of school management including the attendance register and so it is registered with the

Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, the Head teacher manages the day-to-day running of the School and in so doing takes responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy.

The Governing Body must regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

To discharge their agreed responsibilities it is suggested that Governors should:

- Meet to discuss whole school attendance regularly (at least termly)
- Be kept updated on all attendance related issues and monitor termly LA School Attendance Data and external Data.
- Ensure that a designated governor is able to assist with attendance reviews/parent contracts where required. This Governor will be named in Governance roles.
- Decide clearly on the policy towards poor attendance for non-compulsory school age children (nursery) – e.g. removal from roll at an agreed point (following intervention and a further decrease in attendance levels)
- Monitor the school's annual attendance target and its progress towards this on termly basis.
- Provide training for all Attendance Leads on at least a termly basis.

SCHOOL

Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.

Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.

If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners.

Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best-placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers.

Where necessary this includes working with partners.

Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.

Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.

Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.

Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

THE HEADTEACHER

The Headteacher is required to tell the Attendance Team or Local Authority if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of five days and the absence is treated as unauthorised (in addition where deemed appropriate a 'Safe and well Check' can be arranged) .

Headteachers can, of course, notify the Local Authority earlier if there are areas of concern, however normally the school itself will have made and recorded efforts to address the non-attendance through the three points of contact prior to any LA intervention:

- action by the class teacher as part of their day-to-day duties;
- action by the Attendance Officer or Attendance Manager as part of their day-to-day duties;
- involvement of others within the School, e.g. Head teacher or Deputy Head;
- contact with parents and parent/ child interviews;
- records of invites to meetings etc.

Referral to the Local Authority would normally take place if:

- a pattern of irregular attendance or lateness is either continuing or worsening;
- parents do not accept their responsibilities for ensuring the child attends school, and are refusing to discuss ways of improving attendance with the School;
- condoned, unjustified absence is increasingly a problem;
- the parents ask for excessive authorised absence.
- pupil overall attendance remains at 90% or less.

The Head teacher is also required to maintain two registers:

- an admission register (known as the school roll) which contains a list of all pupils at the School;
- an attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age on the admission register. This must be taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Similarly, the School keeps a register of pupils present on the school site during lunchtime, this is needed in the event of an emergency to show which pupils need to be accounted for.

The Headteacher ensures that a clear policy on attendance is in place, which is known to staff, pupils and parents. The positive link with parents can be strengthened if the arrangements for notifying absence and the School's policy towards absence (authorised and unauthorised) is regularly publicised. Each term, the School is required to submit to the details of the level of absence within the School via the School Census / electronic data collection system to the LA.

CLASS TEACHER

Class teachers must enforce this policy strictly

Care must be taken that when taking the attendance register this is done with accuracy. If a pupil is, absent without explanation when the register is called and electronically submitted, the School Attendance Support staff will contact the parents the same day wherever possible. The absence will also be followed up with the parent to ensure that a written note or verbal acceptable

explanation is received explaining the absence. **Where no reply is received this will be recorded as unauthorised. Coding for all pupils should be completed on a weekly basis – decided by a member of Senior Leadership and input by a member of the office staff.**

When a pupil is missing from class for no apparent reason, the class teacher will immediately inform the school office so that the pupil's absence can be further investigated. Class teachers can also contribute to the reduction of unauthorised absence by delivering interesting, well-pitched and engaging lessons and insisting on punctuality for themselves, colleagues and pupils.

School staff will receive regular training in relation to Attendance Policy, Protocol and Guidelines

Safeguarding, Welfare and Pastoral Support Officer (SWPSO)

The relationships that SWPSO's have with parents, school colleagues and partners from other children's services contribute to the range of benefits that improve learning opportunities for pupils and their families.

The SWPSO will work with the school in engaging harder-to-reach families, both in supporting their children to participate in curriculum and out of school activities and their parents in taking a more active interest in school life.

The SWPSO will focus on early intervention with families and children to help prevent issues from escalating into crises and attempt to reduce the barriers that may exist in relation to attendance.

POLICE

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the police now have powers to remove truants found in public places and to return them either to their schools or a place designated by the LA. School has a designated Early Help Police Officer to support us with attendance issues.

SECTION 2 - INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE RATES

There are many reasons why pupils miss school without permission as such; there is no one solution to the problem of absenteeism- for example setting reward schemes, such as certificates, extra-curricular activities and breakfast

clubs. Wherever possible the School works alongside the Local Authority in supporting and implementing attendance initiatives which:

- show parents clearly that unjustified absence will be recorded and challenged;
- visit all persistent absentees on the first day of absence, and other absentees on a third day of absence regardless of attendance percentage (whole school)
- minimise problems in KS1 by helping pupils transition from the Foundation Stage and when pupils transfer from KS1 to KS 2.

The School has considered initiatives that are most appropriate and always takes into account a pupil's individual circumstances. Some initiatives include:

- implementing first day contact with parents of children who are absent from school without prior knowledge. It is hoped that this sends a clear signal to pupils and parents that absence is a matter of concern and will be followed up;
- weekly attendance updates in assembly
- weekly attendance checks with swift communication with parents where appropriate
- having a member of the admin staff responsible for first day contact and the Headteacher/ Attendance Manager for attendance overall;
- interviews for target families following half-termly sweep and a further period of monitoring to ensure attendance improves.
- parent contracting system (see above)
- class attendance displays in the hall, and on classroom doors (raising the profile of attendance in class)
- a star jar prize for the class that has the most attendance stars in a term
- 100% and 98%+ attendance certificates at the end of each term for pupils who have good attendance for that term;
- a Breakfast Club provision for our pupils;

- verbal attendance reports to all parents during parent's meetings so that they can actively monitor their own child's attendance.
- An Early Years Foundation Stage Attendance Agreement for Nursery and Reception Pupils where the school reserves the right to remove any child from roll - should attendance continue to be an issue following intervention.

Arbor stores accessible pupil profiles containing a full range of information.

This school management system:

- is accessible to all staff with specific access rights for the SLT and Attendance Officer;
- enables staff to interrogate data and produce ICT generated management information and reports;

The Head teacher has made a concerted effort to encourage a good working relationship with parents by regularly publicising the arrangements for notifying absence (on an annual basis) and the school's policy towards authorised absence in the prospectus and regular communications.

EYFS / Early Years Attendance (Nursery & Reception)

Although children in EYFS (Nursery and Reception) are not of statutory school age, once they are enrolled at our nursery the expectation is that they attend **every day and on time**. Establishing good habits and routines from the earliest stages supports children's social, emotional and academic development, and lays the foundation for strong attendance as they progress through school.

The school will:

- Maintain daily registers for EYFS children, with absence or lateness recorded accurately.
- Contact parents/carers by the *morning of the first day* of absence where no explanation is given.
- Apply the **whole-school attendance procedures** for EYFS pupils, including first-day calling, follow-up, and home visits if necessary, to ensure children are safeguarded.

- Monitor patterns or trends of absence (for example, regular absences, part-time attendance, or frequent late starts) and work proactively with families to address barriers.
- **Work in partnership with parents** to promote positive routines around attendance and punctuality, offering advice and support where needed.
- Where concerns about attendance persist, offer **Early Help** to support families at the earliest opportunity.
- Liaise with the Local Authority where prolonged or persistent absence raises safeguarding concerns.
- Make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND, SEMH, or medical needs (including flexible start times or individualised timetables), documented through support plans or EHCP reviews.

SECTION 3 - KEEPING THE REGISTER

Registers should be treated as legal documents – indeed, they may be used as evidence in court cases. For this reason, they should be retained **for a minimum of three years**. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must clearly differentiate between whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised by the School.

Register Opening and Closing Times

The school will take the register at the start of each morning and afternoon session, in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The register will remain open for [20 minutes – not exceeding 30 minutes]. Any pupil arriving after the register has been taken but before it, closes will normally be marked with code L (late before register closes). Pupils arriving after the register has closed will normally be marked with code U (late after register closes), which counts as an unauthorised absence.

Reasonable Adjustments for Pupils with SEND/SEMH

The school recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil's disability or special educational need results in unavoidable lateness. While the statutory register closing time cannot be extended beyond 30 minutes, the school may consider the use of alternative coding or continued use of code L (rather than code U) as a reasonable adjustment where lateness is directly linked to a pupil's SEND/SEMH needs or disability.

Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, will be supported by evidence. While an EHCP may provide formal backing, schools should not wait for this process to conclude. Other forms of evidence — such as professional advice, internal assessments, support plans, or records of reasonable adjustments already in place — can also justify and guide these decisions. All decisions should be clearly documented in the pupil's attendance record and support plan.

Understanding Types of Absence

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Head Teacher or other authorised representative of the School - this includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health. Parents reporting absence should give the reason and date of return for the child. If this is unknown, regular contact on a daily basis should be kept with the School Attendance Officer. For periods of extended absence, the school WILL seek the advice of the school nurse and HPA (Health Protection Agency) and will only authorise the number of days that have been advised by the Health Authority for the illness.

NB- Reporting an absence does not guarantee authorisation.

Authorisation will be considered in relation to the reason and your child's past attendance record is taken into consideration. Medical appointment cards and hospital letters WILL be required for all appointments, in order that an authorisation can be made. No absence below 85% will be authorised unless in extenuating circumstances.

Please note – Absences for Head lice will not be authorised.

Authorised absences are equivalent to 'present' for performance table purposes. Even when pupils are engaged in Approved Educational Activity

off-site, they must not be marked as present, as good Health and Safety practice requires that the School needs to know who is on the premises in the case of a fire drill or a real emergency. In the case of a pupil leaving school during a session and/or returning later, care must be taken to maintain the accuracy of who is known to be on site in the case of an emergency - for this reason an effective signing in and out system these purposes should also be maintained.

Brickhouse Primary School **may** authorise absence in the following circumstances:-

- Personal illness (Excessive or extended absences will require medical evidence).
- Medical appointment (Copy of appointment card to be seen and retained)
- Family bereavement.
- Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to child's health and safety. Religious observance, necessitating absence from school (limitations apply)
- A traveling child's absence
- Involvement in a public performance
- Approved sporting activity

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from the Headteacher or other authorised representative of the School - this includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

NB – Please note that NO absences are authorised by the Headteacher unless the pupil's past attendance record is taken into consideration.

All registers must allow for the original entry and any subsequent correction to be clearly distinguishable and that, on retrieval, they appear in chronological order.

Brickhouse Primary School will not authorise absence in the following circumstances:-

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house etc.)
- Leave of absence (which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess of the time agreed by the school)
- Lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed (20 minutes after school starts)
- Special occasions, birthdays (when the school does not agree that leave should be given).
- Looking after siblings
- Headlice
- Family holidays in term time

The Headteacher has the duty to consider the use of legal action in terms of court action to address incidences of poor attendance.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

Persistent Absentees are pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. Brickhouse Primary School will always endeavour to support our parents to improve attendance however will refer any individual child whose attendance is less than 90%, for unauthorised reasons, to the Local Authority at which point legal proceedings could follow, however a variation may be considered on an individual school basis depending on numbers of PAs in the school and school overall attendance levels.

All PAs are tracked and reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Punctuality and Lateness

The School actively discourages late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs. Normal register entries do not usually indicate the severity or degree of lateness and the School therefore

has systems to detect patterns of late arrival. **Frequent lateness of pupils can provide grounds for prosecution of parents.** The School allows the register to be kept open for up to 5 minutes from the beginning of registration, however all teachers must ensure that registers are completed electronically by 9:00am in the morning and by 10 minutes into the afternoon. The school completes a punctuality trawl at least each half term and targets families who are at risk. A monitoring period will then follow and if progress is not made then a referral to the Attendance Team and then the Local **Authority** will be made (10 lates = unauthorised absence)

Lateness is often an indication of more serious problems, but can also be the result of poor time management. 2 minutes every day over 2 weeks equates to 20 minutes of missed opportunities for learning:

- the school day starts at 08:40 for all Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2 children and at 08:50 for Nursery children.
- if you are late (after the doors are closed at 8:50) you will be asked to sign in on the InVentry system providing a reason for the lateness.
- all* late students are marked appropriately using code "L" if your child is late (after 8.50). An unauthorised late code (U) is used with arrivals after the close of registers at 9:10
 - *Children with medical needs who have an alternative start time agreed with school will not receive late marks
 - *Children with special educational needs will have their punctuality recorded on an individual basis dependent on their needs and it may be decided that an L or U code is not appropriate
- if your child is persistently late the designated officer attached to this school will, in collaboration with the Head Teacher, operate late gates to highlight the damage caused by lateness.
- School will send out letters to parents whose children are late on regular occasions. Lates will be recorded as unauthorised from 8:50 onwards for these children.

- a record of persistent lates will be kept and monitored, with reference for prosecution where little or no improvement is seen.

Pupils Present At Registration (Arbor Electronic Registration)

The school uses the Arbor Electronic registration system.

/ - is entered to show the pupil is present in the morning session

\ - is entered to show the pupil is present in the afternoon session

N - is entered to show the pupil is absent. The class teachers use no other code.

If the pupil arrives, late this is recorded in the signing in register in the reception area by the parent or will be added directly to the electronic system by Attendance Support Staff or Office Staff if the time is close to register close. Pupils who are helping with events on-site should still personally report to their class teacher (if possible) to be registered no matter how brief their presence may be.

NB - If a pupils does arrive late following register close, teachers should always send a member of the Learning Support Team, if the pupil is not old enough to return to the office alone as directed by the teacher, to check that they have been signed in or have been added to the system to comply with current fire regulations and to select a dinner.

Annotation for Absences

The Arbor attendance system records absence with N for no reason yet supplied.

If a reason has been provided to staff, this must be sent to the office for records to be updated. Office staff will adapt the code in the Arbor system where appropriate, and the Attendance Officer informed if further action is required.

Present Codes

/ or \ (Present am or pm): Student is present in school during registration.

L (Late): Student arrived late before the register closed.

B (Educated off Site): Student is at an approved, supervised off-site educational activity.

K (Education provision provided by LA): Student is receiving education arranged by the local authority.

P (Sporting Activity (Approved)): Student is participating in a school-approved, supervised sporting activity.

V (Educational trip): Student is on a school-organised residential trip or supervised educational trip.

W (Work Experience): Student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.

Authorised Absent Codes

C (Other Authorised Absence): Leave for exceptional circumstances.

C1 (Other Authorised Absence): Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad.

C2 (Other Authorised Absence): Pupils on part-time timetables.

J1 (Interview): Leave to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution.

E (Excluded): Student is excluded but still on the admission register (up to the sixth consecutive day of a fixed period or permanent exclusion).

M (Medical/Dental Appointments): Absence due to medical or dental appointments that could not be scheduled outside school hours.

R (Religious Observance): Absence for religious observance on a designated day.

S (Study Leave): Study leave granted sparingly to Year 11 pupils for public exams, with students still able to attend school for revision.

T (Traveller Absence): Used when Travellers are travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.

I (Illness): Used for any form of illness, including Covid-19 illness if not distinguished.

Unauthorised Absent Codes

G (Family Holiday (Not Agreed)): Holiday not authorised by the school or exceeding the period determined by the headteacher.

N (No Reason): Reason for absence not provided; if no reason is provided after a reasonable time, it should be changed to O.

O (Unauthorised Absence): School is not satisfied with the reason given for absence.

U (Late (After Register Closes)): Student arrived after the register closed.

Codes that are not counted and don't affect attendance figures

D (Dual Registration): Student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson (e.g., at a pupil referral unit).

X (Non-statutory school age absence): Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend (for early years students before their 5th birthday).

Y1 (Unable to attend): Absence due to unavailable transport.

Y2 (Unable to attend): Absence due to widespread disruption to travel.

Y3 (Unable to attend): Absence due to part of the school being closed.

Y4 (Unable to attend): Absence due to unexpected whole school closure (different from # for planned closures).

Y5 (Unable to attend): Absence due to pupils in the criminal justice system.

Y6 (Unable to attend): Absence due to public health guidance or law.

Y7 (Unable to attend): Any other unavoidable cause.

Z (Pupil Not On Roll): Used when setting up registers in advance of pupils joining; schools must take attendance from the student's first scheduled day.

(School Closed To Pupils): Used for whole or partial school closures known or planned in advance, such as if the school is used as a polling station.

These codes and the criteria of authorised absence are all recorded by the Attendance Team or Office Staff into the computerised Arbor Attendance System.

Temporary School Closures

Where a school has to close due to severe weather conditions, fire or other structural damage or for in-service training, no attendance registers are needed. This will be coded appropriately. The school will liaise with local settings to ensure commonality in closure.

Deleting Pupils from the Admissions Register

There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admissions register. Where a school has decided to remove a pupil from their admission roll for any reason, they should notify their Authority Admissions Team for advice – weekly tracking is submitted to the LA for monitoring. If a pupil is to be taken off the admissions register because the child is moving to another area or school, staff should first find out the name and address of the new school and when the pupil will start, confirming this information with the receiving school. School staff should be concerned:

- if the parents do not name the receiving school;
- if a pupil has 'disappeared' from the area without explanation;

- if a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term-time.

If schools are concerned, they should alert the Area Child Protection Representative (as named in the School's Child Protection Policy) immediately. The LA's Designated Child Protection Officer will then decide whether to alert Children's Services who may in turn involve the police. If, however, schools have good reason to believe that a crime may have been committed, they should contact the police directly.

When a family returns to their country of origin for a long period of time, the school will work with the Attendance Officer to draw up an Extended Holiday Contract, stating the agreed date of return. Should the pupil not return at the agreed date, then the child will be taken off roll as agreed by the school, parents and Local Authority.

Attendance Registers – Security

The School keeps the attendance registers secure on the school network and paper records relating to monitoring when not in use are stored in a locked cupboard. Older paper based registers are archived in the locked Stock Room and/ or filing cabinets located in the office areas.

SECTION 4 - MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The School will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the School and staff, pupils and parents should be reminded regularly of its contents. Effective monitoring/evaluation of the attendance policy and guidelines are dependent upon the maintenance of accurate and up-to-date records. The criteria by which the monitoring and evaluation of the provision is undertaken are described below:

PARENTS

- the degree to which the pupils and parents have been consulted during the formation and implementation of relevant policies; (including an annual update to parents in the form of a summary)
- any pertinent feedback from parents;

- regular updating of the information pack for parents;
- the amount of data and information given to parents regarding the attendance rates of their children (annually in the end of year report or as requested)

ATTENDANCE REPORTS TO PARENTS

The school issues termly verbal or written attendance reports to ALL parents during parent meetings in order that they can begin to actively monitor their own child's attendance. The school sets challenging targets for overall attendance and expects all pupils to reach the target of 96%+ for each academic year. Children who fall below the agreed levels will be targeted by the school and Local Authority Attendance prosecution Officer, where applicable, in order to provide support and a possible solution to the on-going absence.

If parents are at all worried about their child's attendance levels or wish to discuss any part of the school attendance policy further, they are encouraged to contact the school for an appointment. Parents are also encouraged to offer their views on attendance when meeting with the Head Teacher or class teacher at formal consultation evenings, informally on a day-to-day basis and in the annual school parent survey.

PUPILS

The degree to which the social inclusion targets have been met - these include:

- pupil achievement, e.g. increase in attendance over time;
- the numbers of fixed-period and/or permanent exclusions;
- any improvements in the support infrastructure for disruptive and disaffected pupils and those responsible for teaching them;
- the number, frequency or extent of incidents of poor behaviour in school;
- the rate of reintegration into mainstream education of pupils who have been out of school;
- the number of reports of bullying;

- any pertinent feedback from pupils;

OUTSIDE AGENCIES & LA

- the instigation of effective links with LAs' behaviour support plans;
- the effectiveness of a partnership approach, making full and appropriate use of the experience and expertise of all agencies with relevant skills, e.g. the Education Welfare and Educational Psychology Services, voluntary organisations and the private sector wherever appropriate;

BUDGET

- any appropriate adjustments in budget allocation to reflect changing needs;

STAFF/INSET

- involvement by all staff in INSET courses relating to attendance issues as required;
- school management involvement in attendance issues;
- any improvements in the support infrastructure for disruptive and disaffected pupils and those responsible for teaching them;

INDEPENDENT REPORTS

Analysis and publication of OFSTED / LA reports/DfE live attendance data

Key staff from this policy:

- Headteacher – Mr. P. Newby
- Attendance Champion – Mr. P. Newby (Headteacher)
- Attendance Leader – Miss K. Gaymer (Deputy Headteacher)
- Attendance Officer – Mrs C Green (Not School Based)
- Attendance Administrator – Miss B. Cooper
- First Day Calling – Office Staff

- Local Authority School Attendance Support Officer (Not School Based) – Mr S. Marriott
- Safeguarding, Welfare & Pastoral Support Officer - Mrs C Newby

Date: September 2025

Review: September 2026

APPENDIX A - PENALTY NOTICE CODE OF CONDUCT

1. The purpose of this local code of conduct is to ensure that penalty notices for school absence are issued in a manner that is fair and consistent across Sandwell. The code sets out the arrangements for administering penalty notices in Sandwell and must be adhered to by anyone issuing a penalty notice for school absence in this area. The code complies with relevant regulations and the Department for Education's national framework for penalty notices as set out in the ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance.

Consultation

2. This code has been drawn up in consultation with the headteachers and governing bodies of state funded school and the local police force.

Legal Basis

3. The regular, punctual attendance of pupils at the school where they are registered is both a legal requirement and essential for students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them.
4. Penalty notices may be issued to a parent as an alternative to prosecution for irregular school attendance under s444 of the Education Act 1996. They can only be issued in relation to pupils of compulsory school age in maintained schools, pupil referral units, academy schools, alternative education provision academies, and certain off-site places as set out in section 444A (1) (b).
5. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) set out how penalty notices for school absence must be used.
6. A penalty notice can only be issued by an authorised officer, that is, a headteacher or a deputy or assistant head authorised by them, an authorised local authority officer or a police constable. In Sandwell, penalty notices will be issued by authorised local authority officers at the request of a Head Teacher, someone authorised by them, or at the request of a police officer.
7. The national framework for penalty notices is published in statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance'. It provides

further national guidance on the operation of penalty notice schemes for school absence in England.

8. Schools and the local authority will decide which parent(s) to involve in attendance legal intervention according to the circumstances of each individual case.
9. A parent includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent or parents with day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's attendance or the parent or parents who have allowed the absence, regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence.

Rationale

10. Research published by the Department for Education in May 2022 found pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.
 - ~ Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.
 - ~ Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.
11. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and often the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.
12. Where difficulties arise with school attendance, professionals should take a 'support first' approach in line with the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance, only resorting to legal enforcement when necessary. The aim is that the need for legal enforcement is reduced by taking a supportive approach to tackle the barriers to attendance and intervening early before absence becomes entrenched.

13. The national framework for penalty notices is based on the principles that penalty notices should only be used in cases where:
- ~ support is not appropriate (for example, where a term time holiday has been taken) or where support has been provided and not engaged with or not worked, and
 - ~ they are the most appropriate tool to change parental behaviour and improve attendance for that family.
 - ~

Circumstances where a penalty notice for absence may be appropriate

National Threshold of 10 sessions in 10 school weeks

14. The national threshold is met when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks, with one of, or a combination of the following codes:
- ~ Code G: the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday
 - ~ Code N: the circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established
 - ~ Code O: none of the other rows of Table 3 in Regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies)
 - ~ Code U: the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)
15. A school week means any week (Monday to Sunday) in which there is at least one school session. The 10 school-week period may span different terms or school years – for example: 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the summer term in one school year and a further eight within the autumn term of the next school year.
16. When a school becomes aware that the national threshold has been met, they must consider whether a penalty notice can and should be issued or not and where appropriate, a referral made to the Council's Schools Attendance Support Service.

Truancy Sweep

17. During or following a truancy sweep, a penalty notice may be issued in relation to the absence and the local authority will retain the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the national threshold is met.

Excluded pupils

18. Where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion.

Repeated penalty notices

19. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not achieving the desired change in behaviour, they may not be most appropriate tool. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of two penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period.

Key considerations prior to the issue of a penalty notice for school absence

20. The following considerations will be made before issuing a penalty notice to ensure consistency of approach.
21. Where children do not have current attendance concerns and where support is not appropriate (for example, where the parent takes the child on an unauthorised leave of absence in term time), consideration will be given to:
 - ~ Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour or would one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
 - ~ Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010
 - ~ Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice in this case given the local authority would be accepting responsibility for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment?
22. In cases where support is appropriate to address historic / ongoing irregular attendance concerns, consideration will be given to:
 - ~ Has sufficient support been provided? Support is defined as any activity intended to improve the pupil's attendance and should be tailored to the individual circumstances relating to the pupils absence. Where appropriate schools should work closely with the appropriate partner agencies.

- ~ Is a penalty notice the best tool available likely to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this family or would one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- ~ Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010
- ~ Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice in this case given the local authority would be accepting responsibility for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment?

23. If the answer to the above questions is 'yes', then a penalty notice (or a notice to improve in cases where support is appropriate) will usually be issued, providing it is in the public interest to do so.

Notice to improve

24. A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a notice to improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support.
25. A notice to improve may be issued by either the school or the local authority.
26. The school and/or the local authority will determine whether a notice to improve is appropriate or not. It may not be appropriate where it is not expected to have any impact on a parent's behaviour (e.g., the parent has already received one for a similar offence).
27. A notice to improve must state the timescales for the improvement period, which should be no more than 20 school days. School will monitor attendance during the improvement period following a notice to improve being issued.
28. Where there has been sufficient and/or sustained improvement of attendance, it is not expected that further legal intervention will be necessary at that stage. If there has been no or insufficient improvement of attendance, further consideration will be given to the issue of a penalty notice.

Penalty notices issued for absences from 2024/25 school year onwards

29. For issuing penalty notices for absences occurring after the start of the 2024/25 school year, the “proceeding 3-year period” means the period of 3 years ending with the date on which the penalty notice is issued.
30. Where no penalty notice has been issued to the parent in respect of an individual child in the preceding 3-year period, the amount of the penalty is £80 where the amount is paid within the period of 21 days beginning with the date on which the notice is issued, rising to £160 between days 21 and 28.
31. Where a penalty notice has been issued to the parent in respect of an individual child in the preceding 3-year period, the amount of the penalty is £160 and is payable within 28 days.
32. Where two previous penalty notices have been issued and the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within the rolling 3-year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. Instead, an alternative strategy or legal intervention will be used having considered any previous penalty notices, which were unpaid, and any subsequent prosecution of offences.
33. For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward if the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were
 - ~ withdrawn
 - ~ issued in respect of an excluded pupil
 - ~ issued in respect of an absence prior to the start of the 2024/25 school year

Withdrawing a penalty notice

34. A penalty notice may be withdrawn if
 - ~ it ought not to have been issued or issued to the person named as the recipient;
 - ~ the notice contains material errors;
 - ~ the issuer did not comply with this code of conduct; or
 - ~ after the expiry of the last date for payment, the penalty notice is unpaid and the local authority has neither instituted proceedings for the offence to which the notice relates nor is contemplating such proceedings.

35. Where a penalty notice has been withdrawn, notice of the withdrawal shall be given to the parent and any amount paid by way of penalty in pursuance of that notice shall be repaid to the person who paid it.
36. No proceedings shall be continued or instituted against the parent for the offence about which the withdrawn notice was issued or for an offence under S444 of the Education Act 1996 arising out of the same circumstances, except where it was withdrawn due to a material error and a further penalty notice was issued at the same time as withdrawal of the original notice.

Payment of penalty notices

37. The arrangements for the paying penalties will be detailed on the penalty notice. The local authority will retain any revenue to cover enforcement and administration of justice costs as detailed in legislation.

There is no statutory right of appeal to the local authority against the issue of a penalty notice. The local authority issue penalty notices at the request of the Headteacher/Principal. Any dispute/challenge about penalty notices must be referred to Headteacher/Principal.

How authorised officers will work together

38. Authorised officers should work together to ensure that penalty notices are used when likely to be effective and change behaviour.
39. On receipt of the relevant referral form(s) from the school or the police, the local authority will continue to issue penalty notices on their behalf.
40. An authorised local authority officer will decide whether proportionate support has been provided, and whether that support has worked or not.
41. The local authority will inform the school if, and why, a referral is not being progressed. It will also inform the school about whether penalty notices are paid, withdrawn or the case is to be prosecuted for the original offence. They will do this half-termly by way of email.

42. Where pupils move between local authority areas and it is necessary to establish whether a penalty notice has previously been issued, Sandwell can be contacted by email at crossborder_pn@sandwell.gov.uk

43. Where pupils attend school within Sandwell but live in a different local authority area, Sandwell will accept referrals from Sandwell schools for children on their roll.