



BEAUCHAMPS HIGH SCHOOL

Beauchamps Drive, Wickford, SS11 8LY
Headteacher: Mathew Harper BA Hons, NPQH



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

School Policy/Procedure No: 07

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Senior Leader with strategic oversight of attendance

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Introduction

Beauchamps High School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an effective, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities: Working Together to Improve School Attendance. Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

This policy sets out the principles, procedures and practice the school will undertake. Strategies, sanctions and possible legal consequences of poor attendance and punctuality are also detailed, as well as rewards for and benefits of good attendance. This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

The School's Attendance Policy clearly explains the criteria and process for addressing poor attendance and the expectation is that all children should attend every day that the school is open except for: sickness; exceptional circumstances; religious holidays; absences authorised by the school; local authorities' failure to make statutory travel arrangements; or, where the child has no fixed abode. Ultimately, no sessions of unauthorised absence are acceptable and where an exception may apply, the parent or carer must have provided evidence to collaborate this.

Principles of the policy

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement.
- It is parent[s]/carer[s]' legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of pupils whilst they are not in the care of their parents.
- All pupils whose attendance is poor will be treated as vulnerable.
- To recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and punctuality and work in partnership with parent[s]/carer[s] and the Local Authority when difficulties arise.
- To enable maximum student attendance and punctuality through valuing high attendance and punctuality rates.
- To encourage students to take full advantage of their educational opportunity by attending regularly and on time.
- To recognise the external factors which influence student attendance and punctuality and work in partnership with parent[s]/carer[s] and the Local Authority when difficulties arise.
- To meet our current attendance target as agreed by the Governing Body in the Strategic Development Plan.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and punctuality.
- To promote a strong link between attainment, excellent school attendance and punctuality.
- Use data to identify patterns of non-attendance and poor punctuality at an early stage and work to resolve any personal/social difficulties.
- Use data to provide an effective and efficient system for the monitoring of attendance and punctuality.
- To maintain first day contact.

These principles are enshrined in British law, within the Education Act 1996, the Pupil's Act 1989 and other associated pieces of legislation.

Aims of the policy

- To ensure that all pupils attend as near full-time as possible, in order to maximise their educational achievement and social development.
- To discharge the school's duty to safeguard its pupils to the best of its ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for the education of pupils, including parents, carers, staff and governors, understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- To improve the life chances of pupils and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood.
- To safeguard the welfare, health, social and emotional development of pupils.
- To reduce persistent absence (the national criteria defines this as below 90% attendance).
- To reduce or eliminate term time holidays/leave of absence.
- To support parental engagement and responsibility for their child's attendance and education.
- To promote commitment to education and high achievement.
- To maximise the potential of every individual pupil.
- To enforce Essex County Council's policies and practices for pupils whose attendance is a concern and families who are tolerant to this happening, or to use it as a means of improving attendance.

Promoting Excellent Attendance and Punctuality:

At Beauchamps High school, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The Governors, Head Teacher and staff will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the home/school agreement, newsletters,

rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance.

Students who achieve 97% attendance or better, will be rewarded with an attendance badge in the academic year following when this was achieved.

Students who record no late marks, will be rewarded with a punctuality badge in the academic year following when this was achieved.

Head Teachers may no longer grant **any** leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted, following a written request for absence in advance from the parent/carer.

Below is a visual representation of the impact time away from school can have;



RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND CARERS

Understanding types of absence coding

Every half-day absence (known as a 'session') from school must be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, doctor's note, etc. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time or are emergencies. Parents and carers are advised to arrange such appointments outside of school hours.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents
- Birthdays (own or family)
- Minding younger siblings in the family
- Supporting family members with medical appointments
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed by the school

- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (U code)
- Truancy (recorded as an O code)
- Parents and carers inability to provide correct school uniform for the pupil
- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, is counted as an absence for the session

Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities, such as being a young carer. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate. In implementing our policy, the school will consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 or considerations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Parents and carers should do everything possible to encourage their child to attend. However, if the reason for a child's reluctance to attend appears to be school based, such as difficulty with work, or relationship issues within school, **parents and carers should discuss this with the school at the earliest opportunity and the school will do everything possible to resolve the problem.** Failing to address a child's reluctance to attend school is likely to make the matter worse.

Contacts

Senior Leader with strategic oversight of attendance

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Attendance Manager

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Year Leaders

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SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Timings of school day

0830 – Registration
0845 – Period 1
0945 – Period 2
1045 – Breaktime
1100 – Period 3
1200 – Period 4
1300 – Lunch
1335 – Period 5
1445 – Close of day

Registration and punctuality procedures

Morning registers are at the start of the school day at 8.30 a.m. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Pupils arriving before the end of the registration period will be coded L (late before registers close) which is deemed a present mark (they are attending school). Pupils arriving after the registration has closed will be coded U which is deemed as an unauthorised absence and will affect their overall attendance percentage to school.

Any pupil who arrives late to school will be issued with a lunch time detention on the same day. They will have their phone collected and held until they have attended and completed their detention. Should a pupil fail to attend this detention, they have a second chance to sit the detention on the following school day. If a pupil misses both chances to sit this detention, it will be escalated in line with the Behaviour Policy to a C4. Parents will be notified of their child's late arrival via electronic communication, although responsibility will be placed with the pupil to attend their sanction and develop positive attendance habits. All sanctions are applied to deter pupils from developing poor habits and fostering high expectations in all aspects of the pupils' attitude and attainment.

Persistent poor punctuality to school will be followed up by the Year Team, Attendance Team and if deemed appropriate, a referral to the Local Authority. This is to ensure that pupils develop organisational skills, responsibility for their timekeeping and a clear understanding of the importance of being punctual.

Persistent absentees

Only the Head Teacher or designated member(s) of staff acting on their behalf, in this case the Senior Leader with strategic oversight for attendance, can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, until a satisfactory reason is provided. If the reason given is not satisfactory in the school's view and/or evidence of the reason cannot be provided, the absence will be coded as O (unauthorised absence).

All pupils whose absence is below 90% may be required to bring medical evidence to support any absence from school, otherwise it will be O coded. Absence notes received from parents/carers will be kept for the remainder of the academic year; or longer if there are concerns that require further investigation or legal action. The attendance team works closely with the safeguarding team to

ensure vulnerable pupils are closely monitored. If any pupil is persistently late or has poor attendance to school, the Year Leader and the Attendance Manager will initially arrange to meet with the parent[s] or carer[s]. If this continues, intervention may also include the involvement of the Local Authority.

First Day Absence Contact

Parents are expected to notify the school if their child is unable to attend for any unavoidable reason, such as illness. Parents are advised to call Student Reception (01268 735 466 option 1) to inform the school of any such absences, alternatively they may email (studentreception@beauchamps.essex.sch.uk). All absence messages must be passed directly to Student Reception and/or the Attendance Manager. If the Attendance Team do not receive notification, they will telephone on the first day of absence, to try to ascertain the reason. Please note, until your child arrives at school, the duty of care and responsibility for the child's safety and punctuality remains with the parent or carer.

NB: This guidance does not refer to children who are missing from view or absent from Home or Care. When a child goes missing from the home, or from care, or where the school has significant safeguarding concerns for the child, the school must refer these children immediately to the Children's Social Care Service and/or to the Police.

Second Day Absence Contact

If the child is still absent on the second day without contact from the parent or carer, another message will be sent and another telephone call will be made by the attendance team to the parent[s] or carer[s]. The communication is recorded using the first day calling log. The parent[s] or carer[s] may be asked to come to school for a meeting or provide medical evidence for the absence.

Continuing Absence Procedures

In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the parent[s] or carer[s], the pupil will be referred to the Attendance Manager by student reception and a home visit will be undertaken. Any child who is absent without explanation for 5 consecutive school days will be referred to the Local Authority in order that further investigations can be made through the process of a Child Missing in Education (CME). A family may be referred to the school designated safeguarding lead (DSL) if there are concerns that the parent[s] or carer[s] are not providing support for the wellbeing of their child. If concerns arise about any pupil without a prolonged absence, a home visit may be undertaken immediately if it is deemed appropriate by any member of the safeguarding team.

Frequent/Persistent Absence Procedures

Regular reviews of the registers will be made to identify pupils with a pattern of absences that may lead to Persistent Absence (PA), (absence for 10% or more in a half term). The Attendance Team will be responsible for the identification of any emerging concerns and putting in place actions for each pupil of concern. This will also involve the support and guidance of the Attendance Manager. Weekly attendance management meetings take place between the Year Leads and the Attendance Manager to identify and address any concerns. Initially, the school will try to resolve the problem with parent[s] and carer[s], but if the pattern continues the school may refer to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be a medical one. In cases where there appear to be issues requiring outside intervention to support the family and the child, referrals may be for external agency support. It may be required that some PA pupils and their parent[s]/carer[s] be subject to an Action Plan. Such a plan may include allocation of additional in-school or external support. Examples of unjustifiable reasons for absence from school are stated on page 4. The matter may also be referred to the Local Authority.

Requesting leave of absence during term time

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. There is no entitlement to parents / carers to take a child out of school during term time, however you may apply to the school for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances (the form can be found on the following link - [Attendance | Beauchamps High School](#)). Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Pupil Registration Regulations 2006). If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, the matter will be

referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent / carer for each child taken out of school. Failure to submit a leave of absence request will result in the absence being unauthorised and a referral to the Local Authority who may again issue a Penalty Notice as above. Please note: If you have previously received a Penalty Notice for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance or been the subject of a prosecution for any child in relation to irregular school attendance, you may not be given the opportunity to pay a further Penalty Notice; your case may proceed directly to court.

Consequences of Poor Attendance /Punctuality

For pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality fails to improve, after a range of interventions and support measures have been tried by the school, the ultimate consequences may be one of the following:

- The school may ask Essex County Council to issue a Penalty Notice on its behalf. A Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60, per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid within 21 calendar days it rises to £120 per parent, per child. If not paid within 28 days you could be prosecuted.
- The school may ask Essex County Council to initiate court action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which could lead to fines of up to £2,500, or even imprisonment.
- In some cases, action may be taken under the Pupils Act 1989 to protect the welfare and development of the child.

Pupils who Cease to Attend without Prior Notification Children Missing Education (CME) procedures

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and/or are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. The school may identify a child is CME if, after five days' continuous absence, the school has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil (which would include a home visit of the pupil by the Attendance Manager). The school will refer the child's details to the Local Authority for it to perform further checks that are not available to school. This will involve completing the Child Missing Education form in line with the Essex County Council procedures. If after 20 days of continuous absence, and the whereabouts of the pupil cannot be traced, they will be removed from the school roll in accordance with the Local Authority procedure.

NB: *This guidance does not refer to children who are missing from view or absent from Home or Care. When a child goes missing from the home, or from care, or where the school has significant safeguarding concerns for the child, the school must refer these children immediately to the Children's Social Care Service, and/or to the Police.*

Note: All data on attendance and punctuality stored in school is only shared in accordance with the school's Privacy Notice (e.g. other educational establishments, Local Authority, DfE).