



# **Attendance Policy**

## **Bournville School**

### **Part of Fairfax Multi**

### **Academy Trust**

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## **1. Statement of intent**

Good attendance and punctuality are essential to pupils' achievement, wellbeing and future life chances. Bournville School expects all pupils to attend school on time every day that the school is open, unless an authorised reason prevents this. We define regular attendance as being in school on time every day, and we strive for all pupils to reach at least 96% attendance, with an aspiration of 100%.

We are ambitious for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND, those known (or previously known) to children's social care and those who may face other barriers to attending school regularly. Leaders and staff work together to create a calm, orderly, respectful and supportive environment so that pupils feel safe, welcome and able to attend.

We recognise that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility: leaders, staff, parents and pupils. We promote positive attitudes to attendance, identify and remove barriers, and provide early, personalised support to pupils and families wherever possible, before considering formal measures. Where pupils are absent, we act quickly to understand why, offer support and, when needed, use statutory interventions to protect pupils' right to education.

This policy should be read alongside our safeguarding, behaviour and SEND policies, and current statutory guidance on school attendance and children missing education.

## **2. Key definitions**

Parent:

Any person with parental responsibility for a child or who has care of the child, whether or not they are the biological parent.

Absence:

Not attending school for any reason, or arriving after the register has closed.

Authorised absence:

Absence approved by the school, in line with legislation and this policy (for example: genuine illness, unavoidable medical appointments, religious observance, exceptional family emergencies).

Unauthorised absence:

Absence that is not approved by the school (for example: keeping pupils off unnecessarily, term-time holidays without agreement, shopping, birthdays, caring for siblings, or arriving after registers close without an acceptable explanation).

Persistent absence (PA):

Missing 10% or more of school sessions across the year for any reason, whether authorised or unauthorised.

Severe absence (SA):

Missing 50% or more of school sessions across the year.

At risk of PA:

Pupils whose attendance is falling to a level that makes it reasonably likely they may become persistently absent.

### **3. Principles and approach**

Our strategic approach to improving attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism is built on the following principles:

#### **Clear policy and procedures**

- We maintain robust, regularly reviewed procedures based on current national guidance.
- We use consistent systems, including attendance handbooks and clear local arrangements, so families and staff understand expectations and processes.
- We ensure that attendance processes are understood and applied consistently across the school, and that they are evaluated regularly for impact.

#### **Personalisation**

- We recognise that each pupil and family is unique.
- Attendance support is tailored to individual needs, with plans developed in partnership with parents and, where appropriate, external agencies.
- We give particular consideration to disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, pupils who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, young carers and pupils facing other barriers to attendance.

#### **Practice framework – support before sanction**

We will:

- **Expect:** Communicate that attendance matters, set high standards and promote the message that every day counts.
- **Monitor:** Use day-to-day processes and detailed data analysis to identify patterns and concerns, including for different groups of pupils, and share information with pupils and parents regularly.
- **Listen and understand:** Work with pupils and families to understand barriers to attendance, including those related to SEND, mental health, social care or community factors, and treat all with dignity and respect.

- **Facilitate support:** Help families access appropriate support in and beyond school, including pastoral, safeguarding, SEND and external services.
- **Formalise support:** Where voluntary support is not effective or not engaged with, agree formal plans (e.g. parenting contracts, attendance panels, Early Help assessments) with clear targets and review points.
- **Enforce:** Where all other avenues are exhausted and attendance remains poor, use statutory interventions, including legal action, to protect the pupil's right to a full-time education.

### **Inclusion, SEND and vulnerability**

- We consider the needs of pupils with SEND, medical needs and other vulnerabilities, and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, while maintaining high ambitions for attendance.
- We use a graduated approach, regularly reviewing support and its impact, and involving specialists and multi-agency partners when needed.

### **Use of technology and data**

- We use our MIS and communication tools to record attendance accurately, monitor patterns for individuals and groups, inform interventions and meet statutory reporting requirements.
- Leaders use well-analysed, quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the effectiveness of attendance strategies and to refine them over time.

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 Governors**

Governors will:

- Approve and review the attendance policy according to the agreed cycle.
- Receive regular reports on attendance, punctuality, persistent and severe absence, and outcomes for key groups.
- Hold leaders to account for attendance outcomes and the effectiveness of strategies, including how well they reduce persistent absence and severe absence.

### **4.2 Principal and Senior Leadership Team**

Senior leaders will:

- Implement and review this policy and ensure it reflects current guidance and local practice.

- Promote a culture in which attendance and punctuality are valued, celebrated and clearly linked to pupils' safety, wellbeing and achievement.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and receive appropriate training, including for working with vulnerable pupils and understanding escalation routes.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality data closely, including for different pupil groups, and oversee strategic planning for improvement with clear priorities and timescales.
- Ensure that attendance links to curriculum, safeguarding, behaviour and SEND, so that pupils experience a coherent, supportive approach.
- Ensure that, where pupils are not on site for part or all of the school day (including alternative provision and part-time timetables), leaders know where they are and can demonstrate that appropriate steps have been taken to safeguard them.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the Vice Principal for Behaviour and Attitudes.

#### **4.3 Attendance Team / Attendance Manager**

The attendance team will:

- Monitor registers daily and follow up unexplained absence swiftly, in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Receive and record absence notifications from parents.
- Make first-day contact with parents where absence is unexplained and escalate concerns where contact cannot be made.
- Provide regular attendance and punctuality data and reports to leaders, pastoral staff and governors, including information on persistent and severe absence.
- Meet with parents where attendance is a concern and coordinate support, working closely with pastoral, safeguarding and SEND staff.
- Lead or coordinate formal interventions (e.g. parenting contracts, attendance panels) and liaise with the Local Authority and other agencies as required.

(You can insert specific names and contact details in a short table if desired.)

#### **4.4 Pastoral leaders, Heads of Phase/Year and Tutors/Class Teachers**

Pastoral staff and tutors/class teachers will:

- Take registers accurately and on time.

- Monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils in their class/tutor group and notice emerging patterns, including for vulnerable pupils.
- Discuss attendance and punctuality with pupils regularly, reinforcing routines and expectations.
- Raise emerging concerns with the attendance team and parents at an early stage.
- Support individual pupils to improve their attendance through routine pastoral work, mentoring and liaison with families.

#### **4.5 All staff**

All staff will:

- Model good punctuality and consistent expectations.
- Reinforce the message that regular attendance is critical for learning, safety and a sense of belonging.
- Build positive relationships that encourage pupils to attend and remain in school.
- Alert relevant staff where they have concerns about a pupil's attendance or potential safeguarding issues, including patterns of absence or lateness that may indicate risk.

#### **4.6 Parents and carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day the school is open, on time, in the correct uniform and ready to learn.
- Avoid keeping their child away from school except in genuine cases of illness or other authorised reasons.
- Avoid booking holidays or routine appointments in term time.
- Inform the school of absence on the first day, and on each subsequent day of absence, giving the reason and expected date of return.
- Work with the school and external agencies to address barriers to attendance when concerns are raised.
- Ensure the school has up-to-date contact details and at least two emergency contacts, to support safeguarding and first-day response.

#### **4.7 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, arrive on time and move promptly between lessons.
- Follow school routines and behaviour expectations so that lessons are calm, purposeful and free from disruption.
- Engage positively with support offered to help them attend.
- Take responsibility for catching up on work missed due to absence.

## **5. School day, registration and punctuality**

### **5.1 Registration – general**

- The register is a legal document and is taken twice daily: at the start of the morning session and at the start of the afternoon session.
- Pupils are also registered at the start of each lesson to support safeguarding, monitor learning time and identify internal truancy.
- The school uses the national attendance codes as set out in Appendix 1 and in line with current guidance.

### **5.2 Bournville local arrangements (times)**

- Pupils are expected to arrive on site by 8:20am to be ready for the start of form/tutor time at 8:30am.
- Morning registers are taken in tutor time and must be completed by 9:00am; the morning register closes at 9:30am.
- Afternoon registration is taken in line with the timetable (for example, at the start of Period 4).
- The school day ends at 3:00pm for most pupils; Year 11 attend an additional lesson (P6) from 3:00–4:00pm as timetabled.

(You can adapt phrasing to make clear which details apply to primary vs secondary if there are differences.)

### **5.3 Lateness**

- Pupils arriving after the start of form/tutor time must sign in at Reception and then report to the attendance office.
- Lateness is recorded using the appropriate code (L for late before registers close, U for late after registers close).
- General standards for punctuality at Bournville:

- Arriving after 8:30am (without an agreed reason) will trigger a 30-minute detention.
- Arriving after 9:30am is considered excessive lateness and will trigger a 60-minute detention.
- If a pupil is late more than once in the same week, this will result in a 60-minute detention for each day they are late.
- Persistent lateness (for example, over 10 lates in a month without an agreed exception) may result in further interventions, including meetings with parents, pastoral support, and, in some cases, a penalty notice in line with Local Authority protocols.
- Parents/carers are informed of lateness and resulting detentions, and the school will work with families where punctuality is a persistent concern, exploring and addressing underlying barriers.

## **6. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **6.1 Authorised absence**

The school may authorise absence where:

- A pupil is genuinely too ill to attend (physical or mental health).
- Medical or dental appointments cannot reasonably be scheduled outside school hours (evidence may be requested).
- Religious observance (normally one day for each festival, with any additional days discussed and agreed in advance).
- Significant, exceptional family circumstances (for example, a close family bereavement or crisis).

Evidence may be requested where absence patterns give cause for concern, such as:

- High levels of illness or frequent absences close to weekends or holidays.
- Repeated “last-minute” illness without medical evidence once attendance has fallen below a threshold agreed by the school.

### **6.2 Unauthorised absence**

Absence will not normally be authorised for reasons such as:

- Looking after siblings or other family members.
- Birthdays or family celebrations.
- Shopping trips, haircuts or similar appointments.

- Non-urgent medical or dental appointments in school time.
- Family holidays or travel during term time, unless agreed in exceptional circumstances.
- Pupils “not feeling 100%” where they are otherwise well enough to attend.
- Relationship issues or fall-outs with peers (the school will support pupils with these issues but they are not accepted reasons to stay at home).
- Transport difficulties where reasonable alternatives are available, including walking or public transport.
- Not having the correct uniform or equipment (the school will support families to resolve this quickly).
- Oversleeping or “waking up late” – parents should still ensure pupils attend as soon as possible that day.

Parents cannot authorise absence themselves; only the school can decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

## **7. Reporting absence and first-day response**

Parents/carers must:

- Contact the school as early as possible on the first day of absence (and each day thereafter), stating the reason and expected return date.
- Use the agreed methods (e.g. phone, email or school app).

The school will:

- Send a text and/or make phone contact on the first day of any unexplained absence, in line with safeguarding responsibilities.
- Continue attempts to contact parents and emergency contacts if no explanation is received and may carry out home visits or welfare checks where appropriate.
- Keep a record of all contact attempts and responses.
- Where no satisfactory explanation is received, the absence will remain unauthorised and may trigger further investigation or escalation in line with this policy and safeguarding procedures.

## **8. Escalation and intervention – step-by-step approach**

The school operates a clear escalation ladder for attendance and punctuality concerns. The exact thresholds may be adjusted over time, but will broadly include:

**Emerging concern (e.g. attendance falling below 95% or repeated lateness)**

- Letter or email to parents outlining concerns.
- Pastoral/attendance meeting with parents and pupil.
- Monitoring by tutor/pastoral staff.
- Informal conversation with pupil and parent.
- Initial contact with parents to share concerns and offer early help.

**Ongoing concern (e.g. attendance 92–94% or clear pattern of absence/lateness)**

- Letter or email to parents outlining further concerns.
- Formal meeting held by Pastoral/attendance team with parents and pupil.
- Short-term targets set and support agreed (e.g. mentoring, adjustments, in-school support).

**Persistently absent (PA) or at serious risk (attendance at or below 90%)**

- Formal attendance review meeting.
- Personalised support plan or parenting contract agreed, with specific, measurable targets and regular reviews.
- Consideration of Early Help or other multi-agency involvement, including SEND and safeguarding teams where appropriate.

**Failure to improve despite support**

- Referral to the Local Authority attendance team in line with local protocols.
- Consideration of a Notice to Improve.
- Consideration of a Penalty Notice or, in more serious cases, prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

At each stage, the emphasis remains on understanding barriers and offering support, while making clear the expectations and possible consequences of continued poor attendance.

**9. Persistent and severe absence**

For pupils who are persistently ( $\leq 90\%$ ) or severely ( $\leq 50\%$ ) absent:

- Attendance data will be reviewed at least half-termly to identify pupils for targeted support.
- The school will:
  - Meet with parents and pupils to discuss barriers and agree actions.

- Coordinate support with internal teams (pastoral, SEND, safeguarding) and external agencies, including health and social care where appropriate.
- Put in place clear plans with measurable targets and review dates.
- Ensure pupils are supported to catch up on missed learning and reintegrate smoothly after longer absences.
- Pupils with social workers, looked-after children, young carers and those with SEND or medical conditions will be given particular consideration and multi-agency support, with leaders taking responsibility for ensuring that support is effective.

#### **10. Term-time leave of absence**

- Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time.
- The Principal may only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Each request is considered on its individual merits.
- Requests must be made in writing in advance, clearly stating the reasons.
- Leave will not normally be authorised:
  - During assessment/exam periods.
  - In the first weeks of a new term.
- Where parents proceed with unauthorised term-time leave, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and may lead to a penalty notice in line with Local Authority procedures.

#### **11. Medical appointments and part-time timetables**

- Parents should arrange routine medical, dental and optician appointments outside school hours wherever possible.
- Where this is not possible:
  - Pupils should attend school before and/or after the appointment where feasible.
  - Evidence (appointment card, letter or electronic confirmation) may be requested, especially where there are attendance concerns.
- Part-time timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances to meet specific health or reintegration needs, be time-limited and agreed with parents, and reviewed regularly. Leaders will ensure that such arrangements are clearly

recorded, monitored and used in pupils' best interests, with a clear plan to return to full-time education.

## **12. Penalty notices and legal action**

The school may request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice where:

- There are 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period, or
- There is a pattern of unauthorised holidays or other unauthorised absence, or
- There is persistent lateness after registers close, in line with local protocols.

Penalty notices and any subsequent prosecutions are managed by the Local Authority.

The school will ensure that:

- Parents are informed when a case is at risk of reaching this stage, wherever possible.
- Support offered and previous interventions are clearly documented.

## **13. Removal from roll and children missing education**

- The school will only remove a pupil from roll for reasons set out in current regulation (e.g. permanent exclusion, transfer to another school, elective home education, prolonged non-attendance where statutory processes have been followed).
- We follow Local Authority procedures for pupils who may be missing education and make all reasonable enquiries to establish their whereabouts before removal from roll.
- Where pupils are not on roll or not on site, leaders maintain oversight of their safety as far as possible, including through effective information-sharing with other schools and agencies.

## **14. Reintegration after long-term absence**

When a pupil has been absent for a prolonged period (for example due to illness):

- The school will welcome the pupil back and ensure that staff understand the context.
- A reintegration plan may be drawn up, with reasonable adjustments and support as needed (e.g. phased return, mentoring, supported transitions between lessons).
- Curriculum catch-up support will be provided where possible.

- A key member of staff may be identified to monitor the pupil's return and liaise with parents and, where appropriate, external agencies.

## **15. Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

Bournville School promotes good attendance by:

- Providing an engaging, relevant and inclusive curriculum that motivates pupils to attend.
- Regularly sharing attendance information with pupils and parents, including celebrating improvements.
- Recognising and, where appropriate, rewarding good and improving attendance and punctuality (for example: certificates, tutor group competitions, praise in assemblies).
- Ensuring pupils whose attendance is affected by significant medical or other circumstances are not disadvantaged in praise and reward systems and that improvements from individual starting points are recognised.

## **16. Data, monitoring and review**

- Attendance data is monitored daily, weekly and half-termly at pupil, class, year group and whole-school level.
- Data is analysed to identify trends, vulnerable groups and the impact of interventions, including on persistent and severe absence.
- Reports are provided to senior leaders and governors according to the agreed schedule, and used to inform strategic planning.
- This policy is reviewed in line with the school's policy review cycle or sooner if required by changes in national guidance or inspection expectations.

## **17. Appendix 1 – Attendance codes**

(Insert your existing DfE attendance code table here, adapted to your current version.)