

Attendance Policy

Policy Owner:	Head Teacher
Amended:	September 2025
Reviewed by SLT:	September 2025
Approved by Full Governing Board:	October 2025
Next Review:	Summer 2026

1. Aims

This attendance policy has been developed in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* and Bracknell Forest's Attendance Strategy 2025–2028. It reflects our commitment to a graduated response to attendance, ensuring that support is proportionate to need and escalated appropriately. Through early identification, targeted intervention, and multi-agency collaboration, we aim to remove barriers to attendance and promote every child's right to access education consistently and safely.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Work with parents to encourage school attendance (please see appendix 2)

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- It also refers to:
  - School census guidance
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education
  - Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

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3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading and championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tacking absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupil, parents/carers and external agencies where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues

- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils with their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Nicole Philpotts and can be contacted via 01344 426413.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Tracy Williams and can be contacted via 01344 426413 fsa@thepinesschool.org.uk

Supporting Pupils with Additional Needs
The school follows a Graduated Response to identify and address barriers to attendance for pupils with SEND. This includes using the Assess–Plan–Do–Review cycle to ensure timely and appropriate support. Attendance concerns are considered within the wider context of a pupil's needs, and referrals to multi-agency panels are made where necessary.

Mental Health and Attendance
Where a child is unable to attend school due to mental health challenges, we will work closely with families and relevant professionals to ensure the right support is in place. This may include collaboration with multi-agency services such as the Early Help, Mental Health Support Team (MHST), CAMHS, and our own in-school provision, including ELSA and pastoral support. As part of our commitment to inclusion, we will consider reasonable adjustments—such as modified timetables, quiet spaces, or tailored interventions—to help pupils feel safe, supported, and ready to engage with learning.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the Attendance Officer.

3.6 FSA/Office staff

FSA/Office Staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day by 8:55a.m. gates open at 8:40a.m. and children are expected in before 8:55a.m. to complete morning work.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:30a.m. on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make between with the school and/or local authority

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.
We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Registers are open at 8: 55a.m.and close at 9:15a.m. A pupil will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in the classroom at 8:55a.m. when the registers are taken.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30a.m. or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office, leaving a message on the absence line or e-mailing the Attendance Officer fsa@thepinesschool.org.uk (see also section 7).
We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We may ask for evidence for appointments.

Application for leave is to be made in writing in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides, using the form 'Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time@ which is available from the school office.

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

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher, considers it is due to "exceptional circumstances". The parent will be informed by letter within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code 'L'
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code 'U'

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, a home visit will be made by the Attendance Officer.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels when they are a cause of concern. Attendance is also discussed at Parents Evening.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

In accordance with Bracknell Forest's Attendance Strategy and the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, term-time holidays will not be authorised unless there are truly exceptional circumstances. Requests must be made in advance and will be considered individually by the headteacher. The law does not recognise holidays or respite as exceptional circumstances. School provides essential structure, routine and consistency—particularly important for children with SEND—and absence can disrupt learning, wellbeing and progress. Unauthorised absence may result in a fixed penalty notice or further legal action. We appreciate that every family's circumstances are unique, and we are committed to working in partnership to support children's needs. However, our duty is to ensure that all pupils benefit from the consistency, structure and safeguarding that regular school attendance provides.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

~~The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence will not be authorised for a holiday request~~.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the School Office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Fines will be requested for absences for more than 5 days, the amount of the fine will increase from 19th August 2024.

Schools will be required to consider a fine:

- When a child has missed 10 or more sessions - 5 days - for unauthorised reasons. This does not have to be consecutive absence.

Within a 3-year rolling period which will begin from the issue date of the first fine:

- The first FPN will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days – this will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- The second FPN issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third FPN cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the date of issue of the first FPN. In this instance, alternative action should be taken which can include considering prosecution or the use of other tools such as other attendance legal interventions.

Notice to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for Bracknell Forest.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At The Pines we promote good attendance by regular praise of the children and families in the newsletter. We celebrate the class with the highest weekly attendance in assemblies and the class receives a reward.

7. Attendance monitoring

Data is provided and discussed fortnightly at Inclusion meetings and is submitted to the Governors in the Headteacher Report.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

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

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Class Teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Refer to Education Welfare8. Monitoring arrangements

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

9. Links with other policies
This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix
1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than school		
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
K	Alternative Provision	Pupil attending Alternative Provision arrange by the Local Authority
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance of undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable

C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a “mobile child” who is travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either physical or mental health)
E	Suspension or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no provision has been made
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been stablished before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn’t satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of the session

Appendix 2



Be Your BEST at Drop-Off

Believe – Excellence – Safe – Team

Supporting Your Child with School Drop-Offs

We understand that mornings can sometimes be difficult – especially if your child is feeling anxious, tired, or reluctant to come into school.

Here at **The Pines School**, we're committed to working as a **TEAM** with families to help every child start their day **happy, calm and confident**.

Trust Our Team

- Staff will always support your child and help them settle.
- If your child is distressed, **we'll call you** with an update.
- You're not alone – we're here to help every step of the way.

Why Do Some Children Feel Reluctant?

Reluctance to come into school is **common and understandable**. It can happen for many reasons:

- **Tiredness** – Late bedtimes make mornings harder.
- **Feeling Overwhelmed** – Schoolwork might feel too difficult.
- **Mixed Messages** – If school isn't presented as important at home, children may mirror that attitude.
- **Separation Anxiety** – Especially after weekends or holidays.



What Can Help?

1. Create a Calm Morning Routine

- Consistent bedtimes (ideally 8:00–8:30 PM for primary-aged children).
- Morning checklists to avoid last-minute stress.
- Give extra time for breakfast and getting ready.

2. Stay Positive About School

- Speak confidently and positively about school—even if your child resists.
- Avoid saying things like *"You don't have to go if you're sad."*
- Instead, say: *"Your teacher will help you, and I'll be so proud when you go in."*

3. At Drop-Off: Keep It Brief and Cheerful

- **Say goodbye with a smile and go.** This may feel hard, but it actually **reduces anxiety**.
- Lingering can signal to your child that there's something to worry about.