



Beechwood Park

Pupil Attendance Policy

for the whole School including EYFS

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Aims

Beechwood Park School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being, socialising and wider life chances.

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the school is able to benefit from the life of the school and to make their full contribution;
- to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the school, reduce absence and set out the school's approach to the management of absence / non-attendance;
- to recognise the linkages between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equity and protection.

Introduction

We believe outstanding attendance and punctuality are vital in enabling pupils to make the most of their learning opportunities and, therefore preparing them for the demands of their adult life. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential if pupils are to achieve their full potential. If pupils are not in school attending their lessons or other related curriculum activities, they will have gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding of subjects.

With good attendance, pupils maximise the educational opportunities available to them, achieve better outcomes, gain confidence, have increased self-esteem, and develop essential skills in preparation for their progression to senior schools and in the wider world.

As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy applies to the whole School (including the EYFS) and is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the school to record attendance and absence. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and curriculum. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

Beechwood park has a statutory duty to report to the local education authority any pupil who is deleted from the admission register in accordance with regulation 12(3) of the *Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*.

It also has a statutory duty to record all pupil attendance and raise attendance concerns without delay with *Hertfordshire Local Safeguarding Partnership*.

Regulatory framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the school's responsibilities under:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- *National minimum standards for boarding schools* (DfE, September 2022);
- *EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers* (DfE, January 2024);
- Education and Skills Act 2008;
- Children Act 1989 and 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Equality Act 2010; and
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE, applies from 19 August 2024);
- [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) (DfE, applies from 19 August 2024);
- [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance](#) (DfE, September 2023);
- [Guidance for parents on school attendance](#) (Office of the Children's Commissioner, September 2023);
- ['Is my child too ill for school?' guidance](#) (NHS, April 2024);
- [Keeping children safe in education](#) (DfE, September 2024);¹
- [Children missing education](#) (DfE, September 2016);
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) (DfE, August 2017);
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) (DfE, February 2023);
- [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#) (DfE, February 2023);
- [SEND Code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (DfE and Department of Health, May 2015)

Publication and availability

This policy is published on the school website and is available in hard copy on request.

Definitions and interpretation

Where the following words or phrases are used in this policy:

- references to **attendance** include references to attendance for all or part of the timetabled school day
- references to a **parent** means:
 - all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
 - any person who has parental responsibility for a pupil; and
 - any person who has day-to-day responsibility for a pupil (i.e. lives with and looks after a pupil).
- references to a **pupil** includes anyone who is receiving an education at the school.

Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

- The governors have overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy.
- The governors recognise that improving attendance is a school leadership responsibility and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) has overall oversight for championing and improving attendance at school.

To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the key responsibilities are:

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	As required, and at least yearly
Monitoring the implementation of the policy	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	As required, and at least termly
Formal annual review	Governors	Annually

The importance of good attendance

The school recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture.

In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:

- the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life;
- the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and / or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding and wellbeing;
- the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;
- that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
- children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

School responsibilities

Beechwood Park School acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the school community.

The school will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.

Where there are challenges to attendance, the school will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.

The school will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the school's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.

The school uses iSAMS to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

Staff responsibilities

The Deputy Head (Pastoral)'s responsibilities are:

- to set a clear vision for improving attendance at Beechwood Park School;
- to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
- to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;
- to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and
- to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.

Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance

Form Teachers have day to day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality.

They should:

- have a formal routine for taking the register accurately each morning and afternoon; in the case of pupils in Y5 and in the Senior Department, a member of staff on duty takes the afternoon registration as the pupils go to lunch;
- make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupil/parents to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the school;
- look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform their Head of Department (or the Deputy Head (Pastoral)) of any specific concerns;
- discuss non-attendance and / or lateness with pupils and parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance.

Pupil responsibilities

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The school therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and manages poor attendance.

Pupils should be aware that:

- they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school day;
- they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
- they should not leave a lesson or the school site without permission; if they leave school during the day time (appointment, for example), pupils must sign out or their parent/carer must sign them out a Front Desk. Parents in Woodlands sign out their child in Woodlands.
- any unexplained absence will be followed up;
- persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in the school taking action.

This may take the form of:

- offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;
- communication with parents;
- reporting to other agencies such as Children's Services.

If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although their first port of call should be their Form Teacher. They can always talk to a nurse in Surgery. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

Parent / carer responsibilities

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, 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.

This means pupils 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.

As part of the contract with parents, the school requires parents to work in partnership with the school, ensuring that all parties support high levels of school attendance and punctuality.

Attendance and punctuality for the whole school day is paramount if Beechwood Park is to achieve its child-centred mission and achieve the objectives of the *BPS Curriculum Policy*.

The school will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.

The school expects pupils to arrive at school on time to prepare themselves for the school day and to register punctually. Form Teachers enlist the support of parents to help pupils to organise their busy days.

The School encourages parents who struggle with their child's levels of attendance or punctuality to raise concerns without delay with their child's *Form Teacher, Head of Year* and *PHoD*.

The school expects all parents/carers to:

- make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity;
- notify the school of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this; and
- cooperate with the school to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.

School arrangements

The school will accurately complete admission and attendance registers. A secretary at Front Desk will follow-up absences. These registers are kept electronically on iSAMS.

Monitoring attendance

The school will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

Such analysis may include:

- monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
- using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the Learning Support Department and the DSL);
- conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
- benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
- monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented; and
- providing data and reports to the Governors (via the Academic Committee) to support its work.

Additional needs

The school recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance.

It will also work with parents, and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.

Suitable strategies will also be considered for pupils with any emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

The school will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

Information sharing

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

Where necessary, the school, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil (e.g. health services where there are medical conditions or the police where there are extra-familial harms).

The school is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- new pupil and deletion returns;
- attendance returns
- sickness returns.

The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. These officers are also permitted to take digital or physical extracts of the school's registers.

The school must provide specific pupil information on request to the Secretary of State. The school meets this requirement by having an electronic management information system (iSAMS) containing the required information that can be accessed by the DfE. The school also uses this tool to monitor pupil level of attendance and understand trends in attendance patterns.

Where appropriate, the school is expected to inform a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences.

Record keeping and confidentiality

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the school's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The school's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law.

Managing attendance

The school monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance and as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils and promote attendance. It accurately completes admission and attendance registers as required by law and set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively. The admission and attendance registers are kept electronically on iSAMS and are retained by the school for the relevant time period as stated by law.

The school expects all pupils to be present at school for the whole of the school day, usually from registration at 08:15am to close at 08:25am, but this period may be extended, for example for out of school clubs, sports fixtures or school trips. However, the school expects all morning registers to be completed by 09.30am.

Reporting absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school office by telephone or by email before 09:00am or as soon as is reasonably possible on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return.

Where a pupil is ill, the school should be notified of the nature of the illness.

Managing absence

Incomplete registers:

- If a register is incomplete, Front Desk staff will contact the teacher responsible and request they update it.
- If required, Front Desk will check the lessons of un-registered pupils to see if they are there before contacting parents.

Absent pupils:

- All registers are taken in the morning and afternoon (after lunch). Any missing marks will be followed up by Front Desk staff, either by emailing / speaking to the Form Teacher and / or calling parents if the absence has not been reported to staff. **All AM absences are followed up and completed by 09:30 (where possible).**
- The Out of School list from iSAMS is sent to all staff, including Surgery.

Fire drill registers:

- Fire Drill registers are checked / updated routinely by the secretaries at Front Desk before the start of each term. They update the Fire Registers throughout the year, as and when is required.

Arrangements for reporting subsequent absence

Absences are recorded on the iSAMS Attendance Register using the appropriate code, as set out in Appendix 3.

Authorised absences

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (granted an authorised leave of absence) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Applications for an authorised leave of absence

Apart from illness, no pupil should be away from school without prior permission from the Form Teacher or the Head of School Department.

Applications for authorised leaves of absence during the school day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made via the school portal. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Length of the proposed leave
- Age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work missed
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time requests
- When the request was made

All requests for leave of absence will receive a response.

If permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be **unauthorised**.

Dental or medical appointments should be made during school holidays except in cases of emergency when the school office should be informed. However, the school recognises that making medical or dental appointments during the holidays or at the weekend is not always possible nor practical.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head of School Department to determine the length of the time the pupil is permitted to be away from school. It will be recorded as an authorised absence. See Appendix 3 for more details.

Religious Observance

Staff at Beechwood Park acknowledge the multi-faith nature of our school community and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals and celebrations may fall outside the school holiday periods or weekends and that this necessitates consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

Suspension and Expulsion

In these circumstances, the pupil's absence is counted as an authorised absence. The pupil's Head of Year will plan for work to be sent home.

Reporting duties

The school has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attend, their absence is unauthorised. The school must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority.

Each time the school's attendance register is completed it is treated as a contact point for these purposes.

Action will also be taken in accordance with the missing child policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection policy if any absence of a pupil from the school gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Support Systems

Beechwood Park recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, and those with physical or mental health needs.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Learning mentors
- Friendship groups
- Bespoke timetables
- Additional learning support
- Home visits (if appropriate)
- Referrals to support agencies

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with parents and pupils.

Appendix 1: Admission Register

In accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the school will:

- maintain an admission register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the school (also known as the school roll); and
- inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the school's admission register at non-standard transition points.

The admission register is kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

The school ensures that every entry in the school's admission register is preserved for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.

The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the school, including:

- the pupil's legal names and the name normally used in school;
- the addresses of the child; and
- the pupils start date.

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted.

Where the School notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide it with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the address of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;
- the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
- the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Appendix 2: Attendance Register

The school records and monitors the attendance of all pupils (both of compulsory and non-compulsory school age) in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024. The school uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations. **Appendix 3.**

The attendance register is kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

The school will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.

The school is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:

- physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken; or
- absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended; or
- attending a place other than the school; or
- absent.

The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:

- for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff;
- attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;
- attending a place for any other approved educational activity;
- attending educational provision arranged by a local authority.

Recording absence

Absence will be recorded in accordance with the national absence codes set out in regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024 and statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance relating to:

- leaves of absence;
- other authorised reasons;
- unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause;
- unauthorised absence.

The school will inform the local authority when a pupil is unable to attend, or is expected to be unable to attend, for 15 days because of sickness (whether consecutive or not).

Unauthorised absence

The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the school is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate.

Examples include:

- holiday has not been authorised by the school or is in excess of the period agreed by the Head;
- the reason for absence has not been provided;
- a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;

Appendix 3: Absence Codes – relevant to Beechwood Park School

Taken from *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 – Regulation 10*

Code	Description	Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	The pupil is absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended.	Present
V	Educational trip or visit	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
B	The pupil is attending a place for any other approved educational activity	Approved educational activity
M	The pupil is absent for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	Authorised absence
I	The pupil is unable to attend because of illness.	Authorised absence
J1	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence
S	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination.	Authorised absence
C1	The pupil is absent due to participating in a regulated performance.	Authorised absence
C2	The pupil is of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because, in accordance with an agreement between a parent who they normally live with and Beechwood Park School that the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis, their timetable does not require them to attend.	Authorised absence
C	The pupil is absent with leave for any other purpose, including authorised holidays.	Authorised absence
R	The day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent of the pupil belongs.	Authorised absence
E	The pupil is excluded from the school for any other reason.	Authorised absence
G	The pupil is on holiday, not agreed or days in excess of agreement.	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided.	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
O	None of the other rows of this table applies.	Unauthorised absence
X	The pupil is not of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend school.	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by Beechwood Park is not available.	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	The pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency.	Not counted in possible attendances

Y3	School partially closed.	Not counted in possible attendances
Y4	Whole school unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y6	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be a) contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or anybody or authority exercising equivalent functions in relation to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland; or b) prohibited by any enactment relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease or any instrument made under such an enactment.	Not counted in possible attendances
Y7	The pupil is unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause (e.g. non-payment of fees)	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils (holidays)	Not counted in possible attendances

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