



BRADFIELD COLLEGE

School Attendance Policy - Bradfield College

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1. Aims

- 1.1 This is the attendance policy of Bradfield College (hereafter the **School**).
- 1.2 The School aspires to and so ensures that it does all it can to achieve 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 and wider life chances.
- 1.3 In particular, the School believes that absence for a holiday is unacceptable and may not be regarded as an exceptional circumstance for authorised absence.
- 1.4 The Department of Education (DfE) make it clear in statutory guidance **Working Together to Improve Attendance (2026)** that: “All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community.”
- 1.5 The aims of this policy are as follows:
 - 1.5.1 to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance
 - 1.5.2 to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the School is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School
 - 1.5.3 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 and non-attendance
 - 1.5.4 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, equality and protection
 - 1.5.5 to liaise as required and/or appropriate with parents and with the local authority.

2. Regulatory Framework

2. This policy has regard to guidance and advice found in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.5.6 The following School Policies: ‘The College Behaviour Policy’, and ‘Parents: Terms and Conditions’.

3 Responsibility statement and allocation of tasks

- 3.1 The school recognises that improving attendance is a school leadership issue and has appointed the Assistant Head (Safeguarding) to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in School, referred to in this policy as the Senior **Attendance Champion** (**SAC**) who carries out all roles and responsibilities defined for the Senior

Attendance Champion in the statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve Attendance*. As updated 2026.

- 3.2 To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Headmaster has allocated the following tasks:

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	SAC	As required, and at least annually
Monitoring the implementation of the policy	SAC	As required, and at least termly
Formal annual review	SAC	Annually

4 The importance of good attendance

- 4.1 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:
- 4.1.1 the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life
 - 4.1.2 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 wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils
 - 4.1.3 the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;
 - 4.1.4 that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies
 - 4.1.5 the need to liaise effectively with the local authority and where appropriate with parents on matters relating to persistent or potentially persistent absence, and
 - 4.1.6 that 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.

5 School arrangements

- 5.1 The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers are kept electronically.

5.2 The following registration arrangements hold for all pupils:

The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session and during the afternoon session, recording the pupil's physical presence or otherwise with the appropriate registration code.

The formal morning registration takes place for all pupils, boarding and day, between the start of the School day 8.00 am and 8.30 am.

Subsequently class teachers register pupils electronically at the start of each class.

The formal; afternoon registration takes place at the start of the first afternoon class, and recorded between 1:45pm and 2:15pm.

The end of the normal school day is 6pm.

Where pupils are not in a class for the formal afternoon registration, e.g. where they are involved in sport or trips, arrangements will be put in place to ensure that their re-registration is effectively entered into the electronic system.

Additionally roll calls for boarders take place in the early evening and immediately prior to bedtime as is appropriate for the ages of the pupils; and at weekends there will also be a morning roll call for boarders.

6 Monitoring attendance

- 6.1 When a pupil is marked absent, the School takes immediate action to determine the reasons for the absence and if necessary to locate the pupil, in line with our Missing Pupil Policy.
- 6.2 During the teaching day, unexplained absences are followed up by individual teaching staff if they notice that a pupil is not the lesson: a registration alert button sends an email to the Matron to start the process of checks.
- 6.3 The School will undertake regular data analysis to identify any individual patterns and trends in attendance and to provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at general historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them.
- 6.4 In order to make our approach to registration and attendance as effective as possible, we ensure that the School liaises with parents to resolve any concerns.
- 6.5 The pupil safeguarding tracking on the dashboard for each pupil sets out their attendance details allowing the School to monitor attendance at a tri-weekly scrutiny meeting .

7 School responsibilities

- 7.1 The 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.

- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 The School will respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, 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.
- 7.4 The School will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils who are persistently absent or potentially persistently absent or otherwise at risk of non-attendance; and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

8 Staff responsibilities

- 8.1 The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school and for ensuring that effective liaison is maintained with parents and with the local authority. However, all staff have a responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality amongst the pupil body.
- 8.2 The **SAC** will ensure that:
- all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents about it
 - appropriate training and professional development for staff consistent with their roles and responsibilities is provided
 - those providing risk assessments for trips and visits away from the school understand the need to include appropriate checks on pupils during the course of trips and visits
 - risk assessments are in place for those missing afternoon registration
 - whenever a boarder is not staying overnight in boarding accommodation their whereabouts is known and recorded appropriately
 - appropriate sensitivity is shown by the School toward pupils who may be vulnerable, such as those who are SEND, LAC, EAL, and young carers.
 - appropriate liaison with the relevant local authorities is in place on matters relating to attendance as required by statutory guidance; the School is guided by the local authority on the frequency and character of the liaison.
 - in particular, the local authority will be alerted to:
 - any unexplained absence of fifteen or more days
 - any absences judged as persistent

- any absence even for one day where a child protection concern is signalled
- any pattern of absence not yet persistent but may well become persistent

8.3 Pastoral Staff should:

- have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon; seek explanations of absences required from pupils when registration is late;
- make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupil to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the School; and
- look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the SAC of any specific concerns.

8.4 Boarding Staff should:

- have clear routines for roll calls being taken:
 - at times other than those set down for formal twice-daily registration as required by statute
 - at bedtimes on teaching days, and
 - at appropriate times during weekends
- seek explanations for any absence and lateness
- report to the SAC any patterns of persistent absence from or lateness at roll calls
- follow the Missing Pupil Protocol should there be evidence that a pupil is missing, and
- ensure that accurate records are in place so that the whereabouts of any child not in boarding accommodation on any given night is known

8.5 Teachers should:

- register pupils at the start of each lesson (on iSAMS) and in co-curricular activities (on SOCS), in accordance with the registration process
- deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly, and
- consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the College Behaviour Policy (Rewards and Sanctions).

9 Pupil responsibilities

- 9.1 School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The School therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance.
- 9.2 Pupils should be aware that:
 - 9.2.1 they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each School day
 - 9.2.2 they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons
 - 9.2.3 they must not be absent from or late for boarding house roll calls without the express permission of boarding staff
 - 9.2.4 they should not leave a lesson or the School site without permission or otherwise in accordance with School rules.

10 Additional needs

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 The School will make reasonable adjustments¹ 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;
- 10.3 The School will provide appropriate support to any young carers where their attendance may be affected by their caring responsibilities, liaising with parents and the local authority as appropriate.
- 10.4 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 pupils education, health and care plan is accessed.
- 10.5 Suitable strategies will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance. Please see **'Managing Pupils' Absence from School: a Guide for Parents and Staff'** on the Parent Portal.
- 10.6 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.
- 10.7 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

¹ In this case to meet the school's duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with a disability under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010.

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.

- 10.8 The statutory threshold for reporting unauthorised absence is 10 sessions (morning or afternoon registration) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence. These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years. Where this threshold is met, the School is obliged to make a return to the local authority who will then communicate with parents/carers directly and, potentially, issue a penalty notice.
- 10.9 Where the School has identified a pattern of absence which although not yet persistent may become persistent should it continue, the School will notify the local authority outlining the circumstances.
- 10.10 Where a pupil is absent for any length of time and there is a safeguarding concern, the School will immediately notify the local authority outlining the circumstances.
- 10.11 The School will also monitor the absence of students from outside the European Economic Area on Tier 4 visas and, in line with UK Visas and Immigration service (UKVI) guidance, will report absence at the required thresholds.

11 Parent / carer responsibilities

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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 exceptional permission for an absence in advance from the School.
- 11.3 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-term and long-term consequences of poor attendance.
- 11.4 Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the terms and conditions and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the School unreasonably.
- 11.5 Requests for absence during term time should first be sent to the pupil's HsM and then, if relevant, the Second Master for approval. Four weeks' notice should be given. Further details can be seen in **'Leave of Absence during the Week: Guidance Notes'** on the Parent Portal.
- 11.6 In cases of persistent or potentially persistent absence, parents may be advised that the National Framework for Penalty Notices may apply and when Notices to Improve, penalty

notices or other legal interventions may be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for a holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

12 Training

12.1 **Staff:** The School ensures that regular guidance and training on attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:

12.1.1 the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; and

12.1.2 the School's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.

13 Reports to the Local Authority

13.1 As well as the required information relating to admissions, the School will report the following information to the local authority:

- names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who have ten days of unauthorised absence; to be provided at least monthly unless the local authority requests more frequent reports
- names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly (for any reason)
- names and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

14 Records

14.1 Registration records are kept for six years from the date of data entry, i.e. for attendance six years after last registration and for admissions six years after leaving school.

Appendix 1

[Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE, applies from July 2026)

[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 2026)

[Children missing education](#) (DfE, September 2016)

[Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#) (DfE, August 2017)

[Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (DfE, February 2024)

[Mental health and behaviour in schools](#) (DfE, November 2018)

[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)