



Blatchington Mill School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1. Policy Framework

Initiated: September 2023

Groups Consulted: Governors and Staff

Date for Review: September 2025

Audience Parents, Staff, Governors and Students (as appropriate)

Policy located: BMS website (all audiences) and Staff Channel (Staff)

Lead Member of Staff: Elizabeth Edmed

2. Policy Purpose

There are strong and proven links between student attendance and educational achievement. The Staff and Governing Body at Blatchington Mill School (BMS) are completely committed to working in partnership with Brighton & Hove City Council to reduce overall absence and persistent absence. Our school strives to ensure all staff, students, parents and carers place a high value on school attendance.

When our students attend school punctually and on a regular basis, they take an important step towards reaching their full potential, and are given the greatest opportunity to learn new things and develop their skills. Regular attenders usually leave school with qualifications that truly reflect their potential and have access to greater employment opportunities. When pupils apply for college placements or employment, the school is asked for a reference, which includes a history of pupil's attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance and punctuality are valued beyond school as evidence of commitment to learning and work. Naturally there can be reasons for absence, such as illness, but if attendance is poor it is important to know that this can affect students' ability to be accepted onto the employment or college placement they really want.

As a school community, **we expect all of our students to aim for 100% attendance and punctuality.** We define good attendance as consistently over 95% and set this as the benchmark for all students. For the vast majority of our students, excellent school attendance is a well-established habit, with a large number of students maintaining 100% attendance throughout the year, which in turn leads to them realising their potential and achieving their personal best. We know in some cases absence cannot be avoided and we work hard and supportively with families where serious issues prevent school attendance.

It is important that everyone understands that establishing and sustaining excellent attendance is a shared responsibility and each one of us has a clear role to play. The *BMS Attendance and Punctuality Policy* is intended to give clarity about the common priorities, routines and leadership approaches that have the highest chance of success. Having this common understanding of our roles will create a platform for shared values and consistent expectations of everyone in our Blatch Community. It will promote excellent attendance from all pupils and consistent leadership from staff that fosters a positive and transformative learning experience for all.



3. Policy Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. We believe that regular school attendance is essential in enabling pupils to achieve their full potential.

Our objective is to:

- **Ensure parents/carers follow the framework set out in section 7 of the Education Act 1996**, which states that the parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age, shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- **Promote and model good attendance behaviour.**
- **Reduce absence**, including persistent and severe absence.
- **Implement our policies to reflect inclusivity and fairness** in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- **Offer early intervention support** and work with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Build **strong relationships with families** to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- **Promote and support punctuality** in attending lessons.

The *BMS Attendance and Punctuality Policy* details the carefully considered systems, approaches and actions that Blatchington Mill School implements to achieve this objective.

4. The Law on School Attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to receive a full-time education, it is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure this. Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and punctually, meaning that their child must attend every day that the school is open. There are a few exceptions, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The *BMS Attendance Policy* policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/1200/contents/m1)



5. Roles and Responsibilities

This section outlines the responsibility of key groups for achieving our purpose and aims.

Working in partnership to improve attendance.

Addressing the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with families:

EXPECT

Promote high standards of attendance and build a culture where everyone across the school prioritises attendance improvement.



MONITOR

Make use of attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When an absence pattern is identified, discuss with pupils and parents/carers to understand, and address barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to improve attendance.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help families to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This may involve referrals to external agencies for further support.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly to families. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through an attendance contract.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.



Parent/Carer involvement

The school will *strive to* build positive and respectful relationships with parents/carers to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance, and performance, so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

Parents/carers will be expected to:

- Build positive and respectful relationships with school staff
- Ensure that their children attend school and timetabled lessons on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.
- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness) via studybugs - all contact details are on the website. Parents/carers are to contact the school before 08.30am on the first day of their child's absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support
- Inform the school of any change of address and ensure contact details are up-to-date, including more than one emergency contact for their child

If your child is finding attending school challenging, parents/carers must:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Student Expectations

- Our students must arrive by 8:25am on each school day and attend every timetabled session on time.
- Our morning register is taken at 8:30am and will be kept open until 08:40 am
- Our afternoon register is taken at 2.00pm and will be kept open until 2:04pm.
- Students arriving late, must sign in at Student Services on arrival.
- Students leaving school for a valid reason such as medical appointments must sign out at Student Services.
- *A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L) - which counts as present.*
- *A student who arrives late after the registers close may be marked as absent.*
- *If the student is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised provided evidence is provided.*
- *If the student is late for no good reason they will be marked with the unauthorised absence*



code 'Late after registers close' (U).

The Local Authority

- Has an Attendance Team that work with schools in the city to help identify barriers to attendance when necessary
- Monitors local attendance data
- Offers opportunities for schools in each area to share best practice
- Can provide information/signposting for support services for pupils identified as persistently or severely absent (or at risk of becoming so)
- Works jointly with the school to provide formal support options and legal processes
- Will, where there are safeguarding concerns, facilitate joint working between the school, children's social care and other statutory safeguarding partners where necessary
- Can, where support is not appropriate (e.g. term time holidays) or being engaged with, enforce attendance through legal intervention and Fixed Penalty Notices

The School Governing Body

- Work with senior leaders to set strategic goals or areas of focus for school attendance, providing support, and challenge, where necessary
- Review attendance data at board meetings (including school-level trends and benchmarking with other schools)
- Pay particular attention to pupil cohorts that have poor attendance, have had poor attendance historically, or face entrenched barriers to attendance. For example, pupils:
 - With a social worker
 - From a background where attendance has been a concern
 - With a long-term medical condition
 - With special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
 - With Free School Meals eligibility
- Analyse the school's absence and attendance rates
- Make sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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



The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership team is responsible for:

- Being a role model in promoting attendance and punctuality
- Encouraging excellent attendance and punctuality routines
- Ensuring a positive ethos concerning attendance and punctuality protocols and systems across the school
- Ensuring that school protocols are followed in each cluster area with regard to registers being completed, attendance and punctuality issues followed up

The designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Improving and maintaining good attendance, establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, ensuring they are followed by all staff
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Ensuring the Attendance and Punctuality Policy is fully implemented
- Authorising home visits to support improved attendance, where considered appropriate
- Ensure there is a whole school approach to improving attendance. This could include an 'Attendance display' and regular attendance items in Newsletters
- Attending the Local Authority Behaviour and Attendance Partnership meetings - Lead on attendance and Attendance Officer and bring back LA attendance figures
- Overseeing the number of exclusions and their impact on attendance
- Authorising or non-authorising requests for student absence
- Ensure that legal requirements are met
- Authorising FPNs
- Ensuring- with the Business Manager and the SIMS manager - that the Attendance Officer can fulfil their role

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Elizabeth Edmed and can be contacted via eedmed@blatchingtonmill.org.uk

SLT link – Director of Progress (DoP)

The Director of Progress is responsible for:

- Being a role model in promoting attendance and punctuality
- Encouraging excellent attendance routines across all year teams
- Supporting the year office in their role of overseeing attendance and punctuality, including the use of pastoral data.
- Ensuring that attendance and lateness patterns are discussed regularly at cluster meeting including whole year group attendance, vulnerable groups PA
- Ensuring that effective interventions are cascaded to others.
- Leading, with the DHT, on the strategic planning and quality assurance of attendance improvement practices, reporting evaluations to the DHT for consideration.



Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Checking email, phone messages and absence reporting systems and update registers accordingly
- Overseeing first day absence protocols
- Overseeing attendance processes
- Conducting attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establishing a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance and provide additional support
- Providing parents/carers with 'Leave of Absence Request Forms' when requested
- Ensuring attendance processes are integrated throughout the school
- Maintaining an attendance tracking system
- Verifying that a parent/carer's contact details are up to date
- Liaising with parents/carers as necessary including sending out LA approved letters for attendance below 95%, PA and lateness
- Advising the headteacher/Deputy Headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Overseeing the issuing of FPN's for students with very low attendance where necessary and ensure accurate records are kept
- Ensuring Attendance Support Meetings are organised when appropriate
- Ensuring home visits to encourage attendance are conducted (with AHoY support where required)
- Supporting the Year Teams in their role of overseeing attendance and punctuality by providing data for students below 95%, below 90% and any additional data requested by year office teams
- Alerting Year teams to patterns of attendance for their year group and students with attendance concerns
- Meeting with students to establish reasons for absences and follow up where necessary (external agencies)
- Intervening where necessary e.g. Additional contact/plans with parents/carers for PP students/ ATTEND Framework
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Preparing materials for BAP if required and provide attendance data and interventions on a bi weekly basis
- Assisting with the production of attendance, punctuality protocols and systems
- Reviewing attendance policy, protocols, systems, rewards and sanctions with Director of Progress and Deputy Head Behaviour and Attendance
- Attending attendance meetings with LA lead and Deputy Head where appropriate
- 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
- Ensuring that all legal requirements are met

The attendance officer is Anne Glyne-Thomas and can be contacted via

aglynethomas@blatchingtonmill.org.uk



Curriculum and Subject Leads

Curriculum and Subject Leads are responsible for:

- Being a role **model** in promoting attendance and punctuality
- **Encouraging excellent attendance routines**
- Monitoring the register taking of the subject team in order to **ensure that all registers are taken in the lesson** and appropriate measures are taken if there are issues such as contacting the IT support team

Assistant Head of Year (AHOY)

Assistant Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Being a role model in promoting attendance and punctuality
- Encouraging excellent attendance and punctuality routines across the year group

Supporting the HoY in their role of:

- Overseeing the attendance and punctuality of the year group and target groups within it.
- Leading the year team in interventions with attendance and ensuring all processes are followed
- Ensuring assemblies and tutor time activities support and celebrate attendance
- Leading and managing the rewards and sanctions for good attendance and punctuality including advising on Passport rewards for their year group
- Ensuring a regular timetabled meeting with the Attendance Officer/EWO to establish students of concern and to ensure appropriate actions are taken.
- Ensuring feedback to and from tutors and HoY is maintained
- Overseeing the strategies for the attendance of students with 92-95% attendance including monitoring and mentoring students and working with parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate
- Attending ASM with Attendance Officer and action ATTEND Framework where appropriate
- Reporting serious concerns of repeated issues to HoY and ensure a strategy is in place to support attendance
- If established in school reasons for attendance issues, referring to HoY to consider with CL/SL if necessary
- Referring to external agencies to support – e.g. Front Door for Families (FDFF)
- Preparing materials for BAP (Behaviour and Attendance Panel) where appropriate

Head of Year (HoY)

Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Being a role model in promoting attendance and punctuality
- Encouraging excellent attendance routines
- Overseeing the attendance and punctuality of the year group and target groups within it.
- Having a clear vision of the strategies necessary to ensure that appropriate interventions are put in place to promote good attendance.
- Leading the year team- both form tutors and the Assistant Head of Year - in interventions



- with attendance and ensuring all processes are followed
- Overseeing the strategies for the attendance of students 92% or below including monitoring and mentoring students and working with parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate
- Working with the Attendance officer, school staff and parents to lower the Persistent Absence rates
- Ensuring assemblies and tutor time activities support and celebrate attendance
- Leading and manage the rewards and sanctions for good attendance and punctuality including advising on Passport rewards for their year group
- Ensuring a regular timetabled meeting with Attendance Officer takes place once every two weeks to establish students of concern and to ensure appropriate actions are taken
- Liaising with CLs/SLs as appropriate where issues in a particular subject are affecting attendance
- Reporting to the Deputy Head Behaviour and Attendance on the effectiveness of strategies undertaken

Subject Teachers

Subject Teachers are responsible for:

- Being a role model in promoting attendance and punctuality
- Accurately recording student attendance within the first 4 minutes of every lesson. Registers are legal documents and will be used whenever prosecution for poor attendance and/or punctuality becomes necessary
- Reporting any absent students who have previously been marked present on that day via the duty email system in a timely manner
- Encouraging excellent attendance and punctuality routines- challenge students re lateness
- If SIMS/Edulink is not working or crashes during the taking of the register sending a written copy of who is absent to Student Services and report the issues to IT support
- Supporting whole school attendance by reporting to year teams and the form tutor for any noticeable patterns or changes in attendance
- Welcoming back students who have not been attending but due to the actions of the school have returned to class and support and encourage them in catching up on any missed work

Form Tutors

Form Tutors are responsible for:

- Being a role model in promoting attendance and punctuality
- Accurately recording student attendance within the first 5 minutes of every registration period. Registers are legal documents and will be used whenever prosecution for poor attendance and/or punctuality becomes necessary
- Encouraging excellent attendance and punctuality routines of tutees including encouraging student awareness of their attendance using SIMS student / Passport
- Registering lateness / attendance every day and challenge students re lateness through conversations with students and communication with parents/carers
- Using professional judgement to mentor members of the tutor group regarding attendance and punctuality in liaison with year office, particularly when students' attendance falls below 96%
- Using a range of formal and informal communication strategies, to build relationships with



- parents, to support attendance, punctuality and therefore the well-being of their tutees
- Rewarding good attendance where appropriate
- Recognising when students have returned from a period of absence / attendance is improving to ensure that they feel like valued members of our school community
- Informing Year team of any issues that could cause attendance problems e.g. friendship issues, situations at home
- Fully supporting tutor time activities regarding attendance utilising the weekly attendance data (Google Doc) with tutees under the guidance of the year office

School Admin Staff

School Admin Staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Year Office teams in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Staff training

All school staff are expected to promote a focus on attendance and recognise the importance of early intervention. As part of their induction and refresher training, staff will be able to identify potentially “at-risk” pupils and understand that absence can indicate wider issues requiring support. If support is unsuccessful or not engaged with, all staff will be aware of escalation processes.

6. Recording attendance

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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.25am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08.30am and will be kept open until 08.40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.00pm and will be kept open until 2.04pm.

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 08.40am or as soon as practically possible by:

- **Online:** studybugs.com - our preferred method
- **Text:** 07860055853
- **Voicemail:** 01273 206874

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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.

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. Parents/carers should request a leave of absence form from their child's Year Office team or our Attendance Officer.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Section 7 outlines which term-time absences the school can authorise.



Following up unexplained absence

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

- Contact the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence via text to ascertain the reason. If the school does not receive a response to this text the Year Office / Attendance officer will call the pupil's parent/carer. If we cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may consider contacting the police.
- 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
- Text 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

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly progress reports.

Lateness and punctuality

Students are expected to be at school every day, on time.

The first register of the day is taken 08.30 am - 5 minutes after the first warning bell of the day sounds.

- AM Registers are marked at **08.30am**. Pupils will receive a late mark ('L' code - late) if they are not sat down in their classrooms ready to start by this time.
- The AM register closes at **08.40am**. Pupils will receive a mark of absence ('U' code - unauthorised absence) if they do not attend school before this time.

Any children arriving after 08.40am must enter the school via Student Services so that they can be signed in and their attendance updated.

The register is then taken **4 minutes into each lesson throughout the school day**. This is part of our *BMS Lesson 'START'* initiative that can be found in Appendix 3, in which all students are expected to be seated in their classrooms making a start to the 'Do Now' task before the bell sounds every lesson, every day.

Parents/carers will receive a text message from the school notifying them if their child has received a late mark at any point in the school day. Parents/carers are also able to monitor their child's punctuality via the Edulink app.

Students who arrive late to school and/or to a lesson will receive a same day 20 minute Punctuality R&R detention - in line with the B3 level of our Brilliant Blatch Behaviour Framework. Members of our Senior Leadership Team and Year Office Teams are present each afternoon to support these



sessions and ensure that individual conversations can take place as necessary, alongside all students being spoken to regarding changes that could be made to support improved punctuality.

Failure to attend this same day consequence or unacceptable behaviour during the 20 minute session will result in escalation to an hour long B4 Full Leadership Detention, in line with our Behaviour Policy.

Year Offices closely monitor punctuality and will contact parents/carers regarding any ongoing concerns. Punctuality issues may also be addressed with:

- Punctuality report
- Parent/carers meetings to discuss concerns
- Specific behaviour contract and escalated consequences in line with our Behaviour Policy

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Definitions

Authorised Absence (this list is not limited to):

- An absence for sickness
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time
- Religious or cultural observances for days set aside by a religious body, for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency, taken with the school's permission

Unauthorised absence (this list is not limited to):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the close of registration
- Absence due to unofficial responsibilities at home
- Absence due to birthdays
- Absence due to term-time trips and holidays that have not been authorised by the school
- Leaving school without reason/the school's permission during the day



Persistent absenteeism:

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling during the academic year, for any reason

Severe absenteeism:

- Missing 50 percent or more of schooling during the academic year, for any reason

Sickness

If children are too unwell to attend school, parents/carers must contact the school on the first day of absence by 08.30am and then each school day thereafter. Children with low-level illness are still expected to attend school. The traffic light guidance below may help you decide if your child is well enough to come into school. Please also see NHS guidance here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

If your child has a medical condition that could impact school attendance, please let us know. There may be support that we can offer.

<p>RED – STAY AT HOME</p> <p>Sickness & Diarrhoea</p> <p>48 hours must have elapsed before a child can return to school from the last episode.</p>	<p>AMBER – COME TO SCHOOL AND COMMUNICATE WITH STAFF</p> <p>Headache, Feeling Sick, Stomach Ache</p> <p>Children often feel unwell if they are anxious, if in doubt contact the school for advice.</p>	<p>GREEN – COME TO SCHOOL</p> <p>Mild cough, Cold, Sore Throat, Feeling Tired</p> <p>We will always contact you if your child is ill during the school day</p>
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If your child is ill, please inform the school by 08.30am or as soon as practically possible by:

- **Online:** studybugs.com - our preferred method
- **Text:** 07860055853
- **Voicemail:** 01273 206874

Appointments

In accordance with DfE guidance, routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside of school hours wherever possible. If the appointment time allows your child to come to



school for registration and then leave later, this will mean that less school is missed. Your child should return to school straight after their appointment wherever possible.

Term time holidays

The DfE statutory guidance states that “Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.” It also states that “a school cannot grant leave of absence retrospectively.”

The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are where requests are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

For term-time absence to be granted:

- a) Permission must be requested **at least two weeks before the absence begins.**
- b) Permission must be requested by the parent/carers who the pupil normally lives with.
- c) A parent/carers must explain by completing a Leave of Absence request form why they believe the circumstances to be exceptional and provide all necessary evidence to the school at the time the request is made.

It is the parent/carers’s responsibility to provide evidence when making the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

A term-time absence taken without the school’s written permission may trigger a Fixed Penalty Notice, which is issued by the Local Authority.

Fixed Penalty Notices

The national threshold for triggering a Fixed Penalty Notice is met when a pupil has been recorded as having had unauthorised absence for 10 or more sessions (5 or more school days) in a period of 10 school weeks. One or a combination of the following codes count as unauthorised absence:

- G-codes (unauthorised term-time holiday)
- N-codes (no reason yet provided for absence)
- O-codes (poor attendance)
- U-codes (lateness after close of registration)

The first fine is £160 *per parent/carers per child*, if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

If a second fine is issued to that parent/carers within a period of 3 school years, the fine is £160 *per parent/carers per child* to be paid within 28 days and there is no reduction if paid within 21 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carers in respect of the same child, within 3 years of the first fine being issued. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third



time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action could be taken, such as prosecution.

There is no right of appeal once a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, so disputes over how an absence is classified must be settled with the school before the absence is taken.

Full details relating to Fixed Penalty Notice amounts and thresholds can be found in the Code of Conduct on the Brighton & Hove City Council website.

Religious observances

Absence can be granted on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parents/carers belong to. **Parents/carers must have requested and secured permission from the school in advance.**

Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities

Parents/carers of pupils that will be taking part in entertainment/performance, (i.e. modelling, TV, films, theatre, etc) which require them to be absent from school, must obtain permission from the school before a child performance licence can be issued. The agent, organiser or parent/carer will usually be the person who requests the absence from the school. Further information regarding licensing legislation can be found here: [England Performance Legislation - NNCEE - National Network for Children in Employment & Entertainment](#). For more information, please visit Brighton & Hove City Council's website: [Apply for a child performance licence \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](#) or contact childperformancelicensing@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Young carers

Schools will provide a caring and flexible approach to support the needs of young carers, to help maintain regular attendance at school. Further support from other agencies will be sought, if appropriate.

First day absence protocols

On the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school by 08.30am via:

Online: studybugs.com - our preferred method

Text: 07860055853

Voicemail: 01273 206874

School will contact parents/carers of any child who does not arrive at school after the close of registration, to confirm the reason for absence. Further safeguarding action will be taken if necessary.



Schools will check messages, emails and voicemails for any notifications of pupil absence and will update registers with reasons for absence.

Attendance Contacts

Please contact Ms Glyne-Thomas, Attendance Officer, or your child's Year Office to discuss any potential support that can be offered.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

As a school community we **actively encourage excellent attendance** in the following ways:

- Providing a **safe, secure and engaging learning environment** based upon **positive and normative behaviour** principles.
- Providing a **stimulating and challenging curriculum** that benefits students and sees them achieve well.
- **Working with parent/carers** regarding issues that may affect their child's attendance
- Effectively and consistently **communicating with parents/carers about their child's attendance**, including offering **guidance, support services and planning to support pupils** to improve attendance.
- **Regularly monitoring and proactively responding to attendance** that does not meet our expectations in a supportive and consistent manner.
- **Working closely with multi agency colleagues** to improve attendance and punctuality

As well as encouraging and rewarding attendance, recognition and incentives also increase the profile of attendance, both within the school and in the wider community. Year Offices to recognise, challenge and encourage excellent attendance by:

- **Publicly recognising the norm of excellent attendance** regularly during assemblies / form time sessions (*further information on our use of norms can be found within our [Behaviour Policy](#)*).
- Regular **normative messaging and communication home** from both the form tutor and YO to recognise achievement and encourage parent support and engagement (see appendix C)
- Running and monitoring **inter-form / peer obligated challenges relating to attendance** (e.g. 20 day breakfast challenge) using the **Blatch Arcade, Tutor Breakfast and Passport Points as incentives**
- Regularly awarding **Achievement Points for continued excellent attendance or improved attendance** - These are logged centrally and students are informed how many they have collected, which is celebrated in tutor sessions and assemblies as well as by notifying parents and carers about each point via our Edulink app, giving students the recognition in school and at home that is both deserved and motivational.

Passport

At Blatch we believe in rewarding great attendance and punctuality, as such we have designed our **own reward programme - Passport**.



Passport is a system where students accrue Passport Points, which they can exchange for rewards and enhancements that they value (e.g. *Reward Room* passes, vouchers, skip the lunch queue passes, stationery, craft supplies, sports equipment, event discounts, prizes and more).

The power of Passport is not just in the exchange of points for prizes but also the visibility of the points - students like to see how their excellent attendance and punctuality each day translates to more points - which they can challenge themselves as individuals to accrue or compare with peers. To do this Passport points are recorded centrally and students can view them on their internet browser landing page and on the dedicated Passport page that uses principles of gamification to display totals - the system is updated daily so it is responsive and engaging.

Students collect Passport Points for five different behaviours that they do in school and we as a community value highly. The three categories focused on attendance and punctuality are:

- keeping up **good attendance** at school;
- **being on time** to school and lessons;
- collecting **achievement points**

Using these categories allows students to really recognise what they are doing well. It is also specific about where they can improve, perhaps with punctuality for example. Students enjoy this precise feedback and know that the more points they collect the more they are recognised for their success with contact home and the ability to exchange the points for enhancements or items they may want.

At its heart, we want a system that rewards, in a visible, responsive and fun way, all of those students who sustain their efforts over time, doing the right things every day in a way that benefits themselves and others.

9. Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

Daily Attendance Monitoring:

Each morning the Assistant Head of Year with the support of the Head of Year where available, will complete the following:

- Check the AM registers just after 9am for N, O and I codes.
- Ensure contact with home has been made for students with a 'N' code in the AM register to enquire about student's whereabouts; encourage attendance on that day wherever possible (including aiming to come in later); offer support; reinforce message about the importance of excellent attendance; inform parents/carers of student's current attendance %; remind of the importance of parents/carers communicating with school when a student is absent.
- Year Office teams will know the most important pupils to prioritise, including those with chronic attendance issues or where absence is unexpected.
- Log phone calls on SIMS under interventions - 'Attendance Intervention: AM Communication with home'.
- Move on to O and I codes - phone home for students with below 96% attendance where appropriate to encourage attendance as soon as the student is well enough / support a swift return to school. Again, where the Year Office needs to prioritise calls they will



- consider where it is most necessary (e.g. multiple days of illness, regular attendance issues).
- The Attendance Officer will share via email the daily target group absentees - phone calls home for any students not already contacted to encourage attendance and address any issues affecting attendance.
 - Ensure all phone calls are logged on SIMS under interventions - 'Attendance Intervention: AM Communication with home'.

The aim is for attendance monitoring phone calls to be completed by breaktime (10.40am) each day. The Year Office will use their professional judgement to prioritise calls and decide on which days calls may be more appropriate.

Weekly Attendance Tracker:

Our Data & Progress Coordinator will share the most recent Attendance Tracker every Friday. The year group attendance tracker tab shows the following information for every student and is organised with the lowest current attendance at the top of the sheet:

- Last year's overall attendance figure (%).
- Week by week attendance percentage and number of missed sessions for the current term to date.
- Notes / Agreed actions.
- Record of attendance letters sent home (dated and with follow up actions) - Medical Evidence Letter / 100% Target letter.
- Record of Attendance Support Meetings (ASMs) and agreed targets.

Year Office Actions in Response to Tracker Data:

- Year Office to discuss most recent data ahead of a fortnightly meeting with the Attendance Officer and **add any relevant supporting information to the notes column of the spreadsheet** (e.g. family circumstances).
- Year Office to **identify students to be discussed with the Attendance Officer** with regards to sending attendance letters / further follow up.
- **Head of Year to direct Assistant Head of Year to monitor the attendance of a target group of students** over the next week/fortnight (where attendance has fallen below 92%) - talking to them about any subsequent missed days and particularly recognising and praising excellent attendance. Communication / actions from form tutors to be logged in the actions column of the spreadsheet.
- **Head of Year to identify students that form tutors should be making contact home** for due to attendance dropping below 96% to check in and ensure there are no issues that school should be aware of.
- **Head of Year to direct form tutors to monitor the attendance of these students over the next fortnight** - talking to them about any subsequent missed days and particularly recognising and praising excellent attendance. Communication / actions from form tutors to be logged in the actions column of the spreadsheet.
- **Year Office to liaise with the Data & Progress Coordinator regarding any additional attendance data** / questions relating to the data received each week (e.g. termly comparisons / data to support year group incentives).

Fortnightly Attendance Meeting with Attendance Officer:

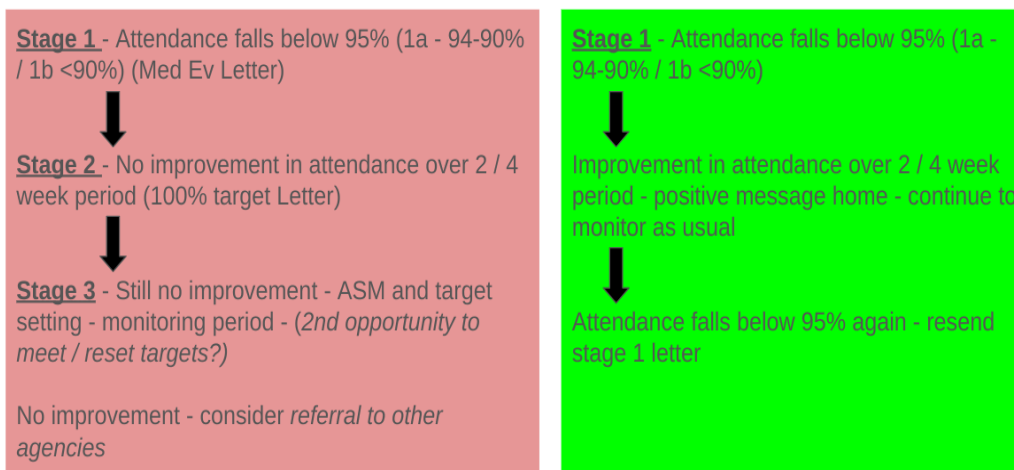
Year Office to meet with the Attendance Officer once a fortnight. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Discuss overall attendance trends over the past fortnight
- Reflect on previous meeting's action points (letters home / Attendance Support Meetings)



and their impact

- Identify next steps for students <95% / <90%
- Identify students that the Attendance Officer may need to raise with their Local Authority contacts for further support / guidance
- Consider students who are reaching the threshold for FPNs



Actions after each Attendance Meeting:

- The Attendance Officer will send all required letters after each fortnightly meeting and log this on our central tracking documents.
- Year Office teams may also direct the Attendance Officer to maintain contact with particular families who are causing particular concern.
- If there is insufficient improvement within the timescales indicated on the letters, an 'Attendance Support Meeting' will be arranged by the Attendance Officer between the Year Office/Attendance Officer and parents/carers. During this meeting an Attendance Contract will be drawn up and signed by all parties. The meeting is of a supportive nature and allows each party to contribute to a support plan and clear targets for improving attendance moving forward. The Attendance Officer will confirm the outcomes of the meeting in writing to all parties and log this on our central tracking documents.

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.

Transition Period (Year 6 into 7) - Liaison with Feeder Schools:

Detailed information and data is collected on all students as they transfer to Blatchington Mill as part of the Vulnerability Index documentation. This contains the current year's attendance figures and details of any potential factors that have / could affect attendance at school (e.g. home risk factors, medical conditions etc.)

Where there has been a history of poor attendance in the past, strategies and support should be put in place to monitor and improve attendance patterns from day one.

Upon entry to Year 7, or at any time a new student joins us, we encourage parents/carers to discuss with us any concerns they may have about attendance so that we can offer relevant support to the



student from day one.

Year Office attendance actions to be considered and completed during the transition period:

- HoY/AHoY/AO to **review transition information and RAG attendance** 95%+ / <95% / <90% (Our Data & Progress Coordinator can support with collating this data)
- AHoY to **contact families identified (where students previous attendance is below 92%)** to check in and ensure there are no issues that school should be aware of within the first two weeks of the academic year
- HoY to **direct form tutor monitoring from the second week of the academic year** to encourage excellent attendance and build rapport with students at risk of poor attendance (where previous attendance is below 96%)
- HoY/AHoY to **check in with identified students (where previous attendance is below 92%)** within the first two weeks of the academic year to ensure a smooth transition to secondary school life and proactive support and encouragement of excellent attendance

Analysing attendance

As a school we:

- 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

Using data to improve attendance

As a school we:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors 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

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. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and we need a parent/carer's full support and cooperation to tackle this. Whilst we monitor all absences thoroughly, **any case that is seen to have reached or is at risk of moving towards the PA mark is given priority** and will be monitored daily by the Year Office / Attendance Officer.

The school will ensure it offers support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.



Where a pupil at risk of Persistent Absenteeism (PA) is also at an increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. Social Services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

In the case of an unauthorised absence lasting 4 weeks or more, the student may be removed from the school roll in line with Local Authority guidelines.

The school follow the statutory guidance on Children Missing in Education: [here](#) and report any CME case to the Local Authority:

<https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/children-and-learning/absent-school/tell-us-if-child-not-getting-education>

As a school we:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Closely monitor the attendance of pupils with overall attendance of less than 95%
- Communicate with the parents/carers of pupils who are persistently absent via telephone/email/letter to ensure they are aware and working with the school to support their child
- 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
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

10. Monitoring of the policy

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team is responsible for overseeing the school's attendance procedures.
- The Attendance Officer manages the day-to-day oversight of attendance.
- Regular line management meetings with relevant staff members ensures effective communication and consistent monitoring of attendance and punctuality.
- Pastoral teams and Senior Leadership Team monitor attendance of cohorts, sub-cohorts and individuals.
- The governing body is regularly informed of attendance rates, concerns, successes and plans to improve attendance

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **96%**

The *BMS Attendance and Punctuality Policy* will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum **annually** by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2025**. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.



11. Equality Act

The *BMS Attendance Policy* acknowledges the schools' legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, in respect of safeguarding and in respect of students with special educational needs (SEND).

The school recognises its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent students with a protected characteristic from being at a disadvantage. Consequently, our approach to supporting excellent attendance will cater to the needs of the student.

The school's special educational needs co-ordinator will evaluate a student with poor attendance to determine whether they have any underlying needs that are not currently being met.

Where necessary, support and advice will also be sought from specialist teachers, an educational psychologist, medical practitioners and/or others, to identify or support specific needs.

When acute needs are identified in a student, we will liaise with external agencies and plan support programmes for that child. We will work with parents to create the plan and review it on a regular basis.

12. Related Policies

- Admissions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Bereavement Policy
- Children With Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Home School Agreement Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Related policies are found here:

<https://www.blatchingtonmill.org.uk/our-policies-and-processes/policies/>



Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

From the start of the Autumn Term 2024, all schools must keep the attendance register electronically and use the national attendance and absence codes summarised below.

Code	Purpose
Present	
/	Present for morning session
\	Present for afternoon session
L	Late arrival before register is closed
Attending a Place Other than the School	
B	Attending any other approved educational activity - not sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered at another school <i>use only where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered</i>
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority <i>A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the LA must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. Schools must also record the nature of the provision</i>
P	Participating in a sporting activity
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience
Absent - Leave of Absence	
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance <i>a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not generally constitute an exceptional circumstance</i>
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
I	Illness - physical or mental health related but not a medical or dental appointment <i>in most cases a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend school will be that evidence and can be accepted, without question or concern</i>
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes <i>pupil is a mobile child (of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode), parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade/business and pupil is travelling with them</i>
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Absent - Unable to Attend School Because of an Unavoidable Cause	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements <i>used to record sessions where the pupil is absent because the LA has a duty to enable the pupil's attendance, but arrangements have not been made</i>
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel <i>used to record sessions where the pupil is absent because a local, national, or international emergency has caused widespread disruption to travel</i>
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law <i>used to record sessions where the pupil is absent because their travel or attendance at school would be contrary to any guidance from the DHSC or prohibited in any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission or infection or disease</i>
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent - Unauthorised Absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure


Appendix 2: The Effect of Absence on Progress

The effect of absence on progress					
A whole year has 365 days; a school year has 190 days. That leaves 175 days to spend on family time, holidays, shopping and other appointments					
No Absence	10 Days Absence	12 Days Absence	19 Days Absence	29 Days Absence	38 Days Absence
190 days of education					
	180 days of education				
		178 days of education			
			171 days of education		
				161 days of education	
					152 days of education
100%	95%	94%	90%	85%	80%
Very Good		Worrying		Serious concerns	
Make more progress than expected		Struggle to make expected progress	Make less than expected progress – lose one grade in each subject		



Appendix 3: Learning Time Lost Through Poor Punctuality and BMS Lesson 'START'

Punctuality:

Poor timekeeping is not acceptable. When a student misses the start of our school day at 8.30am or indeed any other lesson during the day, they are not only missing out on learning time but their arrival disturbs the flow of the lesson and the learning of others.

Minutes late	Learning time lost
5 minutes late every day	3 days of school lost a year
10 minutes late every day	6 days of school lost a year
20 minutes late every day	12 days of school lost a year
30 minutes late every day	18 days of school lost a year

BMS Lesson 'START':



BMS Lesson 'START':
The first 4 minutes of every lesson, every day...

Seated in our allocated place

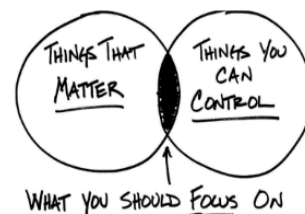
Taken all outdoor clothing off (e.g. Jackets, Hats)

All required equipment on desk & bags on the floor

Read the instructions for the 'Do Now'

Task started independently

All before the bell sounds every lesson, every day





Appendix 4: Blatch Basics: Attendance



Blatch Basics: Attendance

95%

95% is considered to be 'good' attendance but is still equivalent to missing 60 Blatch lessons in a year! We encourage all students to stay above 95%

90%

90% attendance may look impressive but it means missing 19 days of education a year. 90% is far less than most students.



If you're 15 minutes late every day, you lose two weeks of learning by the end of the year



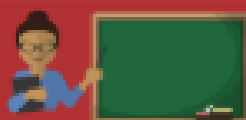
Our data shows pupils with more than 95% attendance achieve GCSE results at least one grade higher.



When you're older, colleges and employers can ask to see your school attendance record from Blatch



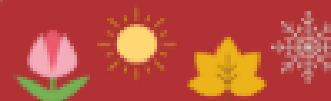
You will be able to make the most of all the opportunities at Blatch offers with good attendance (e.g. trips, friendships and clubs)



At Blatch we have someone to help you build your confidence to come to school and help tackle any concerns. Speak to your year office if you feel this will help.



You can go to school with nits, conjunctivitis, a headache, or a cold. Find out more: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sicknessguidance



Two school days missed each month during your school life adds up to one whole year of school lost