



THE BEMROSE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

The Bemrose School is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers, so that pupils achieve their full academic and personal potential, and they perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. Good regular attendance, at or above the National Average of 95%, allows pupils to benefit as fully as possible from everything the school has to offer. When absences occur it is more difficult for pupils to achieve their best. We realise that some absences are unavoidable, and offer a range of support if pupils have particular problems.

Legislation and guidance

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

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

School Procedures

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.25am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 8.45am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.50pm.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents must email attendance@bemrose.derby.sch.uk or telephone 01332 366711 and press option 5

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

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

Parents must notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment. Parents must email attendance@bemrose.derby.sch.uk or telephone 01332 366711 and press option 5

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Pupils who arrive at school after the register has closed will go straight to Pupil Reception and give the reason for their lateness. The lateness will be recorded on the signing in sheet, this sheet is copied to the Attendance team, who will amend the register. If a pupil is late for school, they will receive a break time detention in the hall, the same day, with a member of the Care & Guidance team. The Head of House will take appropriate action if the pupil is late on more than 3 occasions in 1 week. This results in a detention and a letter home.

Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

On the first day of absence, home will be contacted by the Head of House (HoH) or the primary receptionist, to ascertain the validity of the absence.

After 3 days continuous unexplained absences, further contact will be made to home by a member of the Attendance team or the Head of House. This ensures that parents or carers are aware of the absence, and allows us to offer to provide work to be completed at home if the pupil is likely to be absent for a long period of time.

On return to school a letter stating the date(s) of absence and reason for absence is required, unless a Leave of Absence Form has previously been filled in or an acceptable reason was given to the Headteacher.

Reporting to parents

If there are concerns with a pupils' attendance then the Attendance team will contact the parent or carer of the pupil. Written communication, telephone calls, parent meetings and home visits are undertaken by the Attendance team in an attempt to work with the parent or carer to improve the pupils' attendance.

All attendance figures are communicated to parents and carers through the termly reporting cycle.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Executive Headteacher's or Head of School discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** or '**exceptional circumstances**' include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Executive Headteacher's or Head of School is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Executive Headteacher's or Head of School is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Study leave – study leave is not granted by default, and is only granted to pupils in year 11

Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

In this case a letter is sent to parents or carers containing the following legislation,

“Section 444 of the Education Act, 1996 says:

If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.” If the reasons given for your child's irregular school attendance are not satisfactory, then the Education Welfare Service may take legal proceedings against you for failure to comply with the Law.

This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine
- Prosecution under s444 (I) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1000
- Prosecution under s444 (I) (a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2500 and/or 12 weeks imprisonment. ”

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Rewarding good and improved attendance

- 100% attendance letters and certificates
- Celebration in the school newsletters
- Postcards home
- Letters home
- Small gifts
- Vouchers
- Incentives / raffles
- Trips

Attendance Monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

If a pupil's absence goes above three days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The Attendance team works alongside the Education Welfare Service and tracks the attendance of individual pupils, identifies whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitors and evaluates those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis through the 'Heads Report'. It also holds the Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Deputy Headteacher – Inclusion

The Deputy Headteacher – Inclusion is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Deputy Headteacher – Inclusion also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class Teachers and Form Tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Inclusion staff

Inclusion staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Deputy Headteacher - Inclusion. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Performance Indicators

- Attendance is above National Average of 94.5% in the secondary phase, and 96% in the primary phase
- Home is contacted by the Head of House or the primary receptionists on the first day of absence and again after three days off continuously
- Suitable and measured action is taken on pupils whose attendance is below 90%

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day