



# Bellevue Place

EDUCATION TRUST

## Attendance Policy

Signed:	
Chair of Trust Board:	Claire Delaney
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## 1.0 Bellevue Place Education Trust – Our Commitment

### *Learn. Enjoy. Succeed.*

Every BPET child and staff member enjoys a broad (LEARN) and enriched (ENJOY) learning experience, enabling them to achieve far greater individual success (SUCCEED) than they might previously have thought possible.

#### **Our Mission**

To grow hubs of like-minded, autonomous schools with a strong support network, all of which combine academic rigour with highly enriched opportunities that deliver a personalised approach to education and exceptional outcomes for all.

#### **Our Difference**

We are leading the way in delivering high quality education through skills-based and knowledge rich curricula, applying the best of the independent and state sectors to deliver breadth of opportunity and pupil enrichment. We empower all our schools as individual entities that best meet the needs of the communities they serve and have a strong relationship with families, who are our key partners in delivering the vision.

#### **Our Promise**

Every child is an individual. Our role is to nurture pupils' potential through a personalised approach to learning. BPET children are happy, independent, confident all-rounders. Our focus is ensuring an exceptional provision for all our children with supportive, accessible learning that enables every child to make progress, including high quality inclusion for children with Special Educational Needs. We encourage a 'be interested and be interesting' attitude in children and staff alike. We don't just teach; we want our pupils to have a passion to learn.

## 2.0 Introduction

The Trust, Local Advisory Board and staff in partnership with parents and pupils are committed to schools which serve the community and of which the community is proud.

The Trust, Local Advisory Board and staff firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end, all schools within the Trust will do all they can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the pupils in our care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and promptly resolved. The aim of this policy is to support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at the school.

This policy applies to all schools within BPET. All schools will adopt this version of the policy in full, adapting their own attendance procedures (section 12). BPET schools use Arbor to log pupil attendance, monitoring where attendance dips below an acceptable level. Parents can expect to be questioned and challenged, if this occurs. The Trust will set an annual attendance target for all schools, which will usually be above national average as well as a persistent absence target to be below the national average.

## 3.0 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 has been prepared with regard to the Academy's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled ***Working together to improve school attendance*** (2024), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

#### **Research demonstrates that regular attendance is important for several reasons:**

- It leads to better progress, both socially and academically
- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- It leads to greater confidence and security for our children, which leads to better social progress
- It gives greater continuity to the learning process
- It makes the transfer to secondary school easier

#### **4.0 Key principles**

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the school to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this, and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. The school will work with pupils, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or pupils have, should be discussed with [e.g., class teacher]. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents and pupils should contact the headteacher.

#### **5.0 Roles and responsibilities**

##### **The school will:**

- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance
- work with pupils and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate

- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the Academy's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- share information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with regulations and the DfE Attendance Guidance, and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance
- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- ensure that all pupils can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where there is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- ensure that the trust board and school leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the DfE Attendance Guidance.
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (please refer to the BPT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- support pupils who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the school to a designated senior leader, known as the Senior Attendance Champion
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

### Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at the school on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the school (see section 6.1 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.3 below)
- inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

### Pupils

We expect pupils to:

- attend the school regularly and on time
- be punctual to all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the school late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

### Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champions (“SAC”) at the school are Mrs Lewis and Mrs Connor – AHT/SENCO.

The SAC will be responsible for championing and improving attendance at the school and will:

- set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure that these are followed by staff
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and pupils
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

### The BPET Board

The BPET board of trustees will:

- take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust and school’s ethos and policies
- ensure the school’s leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance
- share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its schools
- require the school to report to the trustees termly through the BPET Performance Report
- have a dedicated attendance lead who will drive improvement across the trust and act as a central point for the schools with attendance queries.

## 6.0 Registration

The school maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each pupil’s attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Registration session	Start time	End time
Morning	0850	0920
Afternoon	1300	1330

Pupils who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where pupils arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.

The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in the DfE Attendance Guidance.

Where a pupil attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the behaviour policy and engage parents where necessary.

### **7.0 Late arrival**

If a pupil arrives at the school after the relevant registration period has ended but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to the school office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness to enable the school to establish the appropriate attendance or absence code. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with behaviour policy.

### **8.0 Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation**

**Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the school can authorise absence. Airline ticket bookings may be asked as evidence by the Headteacher as proof of travel as well as other proof of travel bookings.

**Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

#### **Reporting absence from the school**

Where a pupil is to be absent from the school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the school by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the school know when they expect the pupil to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence.

On the day of return to the school, parents must also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence.

Any unexplained absence will be followed up by the school promptly through phone calls home, inviting the parents to a meeting or conducting a safe and well check.

In cases where the school needs clarification to accurately record the absence in the attendance register, the parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor to support an absence for illness. If satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

#### **Appointments**

Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.

Where an appointment must take place during school time, the pupil should attend the school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to the class teacher.

#### **Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)**

The school will grant permission for a pupil to be absent from school in the circumstances described in paragraph 37 of the DfE Attendance Guidance which can be summarised as follows:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting
- Temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Other exceptional circumstances

Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupils out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.

To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Headteacher and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.

Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Headteacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:

- will be confirmed in writing
- is solely at the Headteacher's discretion and
- is final.

Where permission is granted, the Headteacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.

If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised, and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

### **Religious observance**

We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs,

the absence from the school will be authorised.

We ask that parents/carers notify the school by writing to the pupil's class teacher in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

### **Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

There may be circumstances in which pupils cannot attend school due to Covid-19. The school will adhere to any current guidance issued by the Department for Education relating to the recording of attendance in relation to Covid-19.

If a pupil tests positive for coronavirus, their absence will be recorded as illness.

## **9.0 Other Absences**

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

- Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance through the completion of a leave of absence form.
- Parents/carers must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the



employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they should discuss with the parent/carer the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

- Where a child's attendance has fallen to below 90%, leave of absence is unlikely to be approved unless there are arrangements for the provision of an education tutor.
- Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

### **Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport**

- Parents/carers of outstanding sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions through the completion of a leave of absence form.
- Headteacher's can apply their discretion as to whether to authorise this depending on the nature of the competition and the frequency of the absence. It is obviously vital to understand how learning will continue if absence occurs.
- Permission for a child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher, but this is not recommended to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

### **Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families**

- Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return.
- To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. This results in the school retaining the Traveller child on the school roll while they are travelling and records the absence as authorised through the T code.
- Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

## **10.0 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality**

The school will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or groups of pupils who need it most. In doing so, the school, led by the SAC, will:

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders
- identify pupils who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and fully year data to identify patterns and trends
- benchmark school attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
- monitor the impact of school strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups
- hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of pupils who the school and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable

Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence

- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
- persistent truancy or lateness

we will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

In cases where the school has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the pupil, a home welfare check may be carried out.

Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the behaviour policy.

### **Non-attendance due to Health Needs**

Children who cannot attend school because of health needs:

- Local Authorities, have a duty set out in Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and the DfE Statutory Guidance 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' (DfE, 2013. See appendix 1) to provide education for children who cannot attend school full time due to their medical needs.
- BPET schools provide support for their pupils with medical needs under their statutory duties as defined in 'Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school' (DfE, 2014). It is only when the pupil's medical condition becomes too complex to manage in school that the schools Local Authority policy would then apply.

Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract.

Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the school will signpost and support access to any additional services.

Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the school and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£80 if paid within 21 days, £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.

When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- the National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 175 – 201 of the DfE Attendance Guidance; and
- the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.

In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.

### **11.0 Encouraging Attendance**

At each BPET School, we encourage attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a welcoming and safe environment

- By delivering a skills-based curriculum, applying the best of the independent and state sectors to deliver breadth of opportunity and pupil enrichment
- Involving pupils in attendance through an attendance reward system
- By responding promptly to a pupil's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If a pupil arrives at school after the close of register (30 minutes after the start of the session) without a written or previously notified explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics and school attendance targets
- By celebrating good and improved attendance
- By monitoring pupils' attendance and informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance; arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the EWS or implementing relevant actions as agreed with parents if the irregular attendance continues.

### **12.0 Reporting to parents**

Explain when and how you report to parents on their child's attendance record – for example, annually in the written end-of-year report, or via a termly written report.

### **13.0 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Headteacher and Central Team will review this policy statement bi-annually and update it in consultation with key staff, in line with current best practice as s/he considers necessary.

### **14.0 Approval by the Bellevue Place Education Trust Board**

This policy has been formally approved and adopted by the BPET Board and will be reviewed every two years.