



# 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 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 the 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 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 this is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- ensure that the 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 non-statutory attendance guidance issued by the Department for Education, working together to improve school attendance (2022)
- 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
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education (Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance 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
- 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
- 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 ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://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).

Designated attendance lead

The designated attendance lead ("DAL") at the school is Bridget Reynolds.

The DAL will be responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at the school and will:

- offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- oversee attendance and absence data analysis
- 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 Academy'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 academies
- 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 academies 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.

The register is marked using the national attendance and absence codes which can be found in the [Department for Education's guidance on attendance - Working together to improve school attendance.](#)

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, he/she must immediately go to the school office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness. 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.

**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 or email 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 confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence.

In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the parents/cares may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor. If this 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.

For the time absent from the school to be marked as an authorised, confirmation of the appointment by way of an appointment card or letter must be provided.

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

Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupils out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. The school will only authorise a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances.

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.

### **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.

## **8.0 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**

- 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.

### **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

## **9.0 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 DAO, 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 full 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

Our procedures for managing unexplained absences is:

- Contact the family directly to enquire
- Contact other named persons on Arbor to enquire
- Contact sibling schools to enquire
- Email contact made and text messages sent to parents
- HSLW and another member of staff to visit registered address
- Notify EWO and Children's Services – respond to advice
- Log all actions and outcomes on CPOMS

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.

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

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 a parenting 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 fine (£60 if paid within 21 days, £120 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents.

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

- section 6 of the Department for Education's guidance, working together to improve school attendance: Working together to improve school attendance ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk))
- 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.

## **10.0 Persistent Absence**

- The persistent absence threshold is 90%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is less than or equal to 90%, 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.

## **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 Attendance Monitoring

The Headteacher is responsible for undertaking daily routine attendance monitoring. This involves dealing with late pupils, contacting parents about on-going attendance and punctuality issues and ensuring that agreed systems are followed.

Each half term, the Headteacher will discuss the school's overall attendance with person(s) responsible for the school's attendance systems and Education Welfare Officer and will identify specific pupils who cause concern in relation to either attendance or punctuality.

### Reporting to parents

- *Parents are able to access attendance information through the Arbor App.*
- *Where attendance falls below 95%, parents are written to.*
- *Where attendance falls below 90% parents receive a Persistent Absence letter.*
- *Absence discuss at termly Parent Consultations and included in Annual report.*
- *Where absence does not improve, evidence for absence e.g. Medical Evidence is sought. Families are invited in for a formal meeting with attendance lead and EWO.*

## 13.0 Legal action to enforce school attendance

When a pupils' attendance falls below 90% the school will decide on a case by case basis whether or not to refer the case to the local authority. The local authority may take the following legal powers to enforce school attendance. This includes:

- Parenting Order – this requires the parent/carer to attend parenting classes. The court will mandate what the parent/carer needs to undertake to improve the child's school attendance.
- Education Supervision Order - If the local authority thinks the parent/carer needs support getting their child to go to school but the parent is not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to assist the parent/carer in getting their child to school. The local authority can do this instead of prosecuting the parent/carer, or as well.
- School Attendance Order – A parent/carer can be issued with a School Attendance Order if the local council thinks the child isn't getting an education. The parent/carer has 15 days to provide evidence that they have registered their child with a school or that they are giving them home education. The order will require the parent/carer to send their child to a specific school and if they don't, they are likely to be prosecuted or given a fine.
- Fine – Parents/carers are individually fined by the local authority, which rises if the fine is not paid within 21 days. If parents/carers don't pay the fine after 28 days they can be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

- Prosecution – a parent/carer could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court will also give the parent/carer a Parenting Order.

#### **14.0 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.

#### **15.0 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.