



Attendance Policy

Description

This is intended to promote the importance of regular school attendance and provide framework setting out staff roles and responsibilities in supporting and excellent school attendance.

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Attendance Leader	Carl Poppy, Safeguard and Welfare Lead
Person/s responsible	Leigh Bailey, Head of School
Last Updated	March 2025
Date of next Review	January 2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Bramfield House School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually children and young people will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment is closely linked to good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

- 1.3 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Bramfield House School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

- 2.2 A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team and are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents/carers (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance). The Assistant Headteacher will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration

- 2.3.1 The School is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session (shown overleaf).
- 2.3.2 The morning register will close at **09:30** and **afternoon register will close at 12:30**. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (O) unless there is an acceptable explanation, which will be decided by the attendance officer, i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorise code will be entered.

2.4 Categorising absence

- 2.4.1 A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as Unauthorised Absence (**O**) unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the School as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the School at a later date, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment are distinguishable.

- 2.4.2 Bramfield House School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be damaging to a child's education as authorised absence will potentially send a message to parents/carers that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent and continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Bramfield House School will challenge parents/carers about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note of explanation from a pupil's home does not mean that an absence is automatically authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**
- 2.4.3 If no explanation about an absence is received by the School within two weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.
- 2.4.4 Absence from education – unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education will be closely monitored by the school as per the recent update in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024*.
- 2.4.5 Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
- (a) where leave has been granted by the School in advance, for example: –
- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority
 - a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered
 - in exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents/carers have sought permission in advance (SEE SECTION 5 TERM TIME HOLIDAYS)
- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend
- (c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents/carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours whenever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send them to school beforehand
- (d) where there is unavoidable cause for absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong
- (f) the pupil lives more than three miles from the School and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority

- (g) the pupil is of no fixed abode; their parent/carer is engaged in a trade which requires the pupil and their family to travel; the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, has attended 200 sessions in the previous 12 months
- (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

2.4.6 Except in some circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be: -

- no explanation given by the parent/carer
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday or visit without prior permission
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence

2.5 Approved Educational Activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the School will check their attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

3. Collection and analysis of data

- 3.1 Attendance is monitored by year group, by form group and by reasons for absence. It is also monitored with those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

- 4.1 Attendance matters have a very high profile at Bramfield House School and the importance of good attendance is raised in SLT meetings. Parents/Carers are reminded at school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment. The school is always looking to find new ways of maintaining this message through other systems of communicating with parents/carers and pupils.
- 4.2 Bramfield House School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. The Safeguard and Welfare Lead (DSL) works closely with the Family Liaison Officer and Admin Team and passes on absence details to the Head of School on a daily basis. Key Workers/Learning Mentors ensure telephone calls are made to parents/carers to clarify any unexplained absences. If a parent/carer cannot be

contacted by telephone then an email will be sent, in cases where there are existing safeguarding concerns, the child visited at home if an inadequate explanation is given by the parent/carer. Children who have social care involvement will also be contacted if we have not seen the child or a reasonable explanation has not been given.

- 4.3 First-day absence calling: Bramfield House School has in place a system of first day calling. This means that parents/carers will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents/carers knowledge and thus be potentially vulnerable to harm. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence, then an email will be sent. In cases where there are existing safeguarding concerns, the child visited at home if an inadequate explanation is given by the parent/carer. Children who have social care involvement will also be contacted if we have not seen the child or a reasonable explanation has not been given.
- 4.4 Meetings with parents/carers: Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a three or four week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the School will invite parents/carers to a meeting, or arrange to visit the home, to discuss the reasons for these absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents/carers and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than six weeks. It will be explained to parents/carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.
- 4.5 Referred to Educational Welfare Officer (EWO): If a pupils attendance does not improve, advice will be sought from the Education Welfare Officer. If required a referral will be put in to the EWO for each local authority and procedures for each local authority will be followed.
- 4.6 Lateness and punctuality: For reasons of health and safety it is important to know who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to Reception and be signed in by a member of the admin team. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**
- 4.7 For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day sign in and out at Reception. Parents/carers are expected to collect their child from Reception and take responsibility for checking that their child is signed in or out in the correct manner.
- 4.8 Post-registration truancy: Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a full-time education, it also renders them vulnerable to harm. Bramfield House School takes this very

seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If a member of staff or pupil reports that a pupil is missing then the Head of School and Safeguard Lead (DSL) should be alerted immediately. If the child has not been signed out of school a senior member of staff will be contacted. The classroom, where the child should be in lesson, will be visited to check that the child has not arrived late. The teaching staff and pupils will be spoken to and any relevant information gathered. A search of the building will then be organised. Toilets, changing rooms and the main house should all be checked before looking in the School grounds. The Head of School and DSL must be informed immediately if the pupil has been discovered. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, school staff will attempt to locate them either by foot or accessing a school vehicle to leave site and carry out a search. Staff will try to make contact with the pupil's parents/carers immediately and the local police will be alerted.

5. Leave of absence in Term Time

- 5.1 Families are not encouraged to take their children out of school for family holidays or trips abroad during term time. Any absence request in term time will be reviewed by the Head of School and only approved in exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of absence during term time should be made to the Head of School in writing. Each request will be judged on an individual basis.
- 5.2 Bramfield House School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATs/GCSE's.

6. Identified pupils with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Recording absence as authorised in some circumstances.
- Provide home visits where appropriate.
- Recognise that some pupils are not "available for learning" and work with Local Authority's and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school.

7. Parents'/carers' responsibilities

- 7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Bramfield House School.
- 7.2 Bramfield House School expects parents/carers will:
 - ensure their child attends the school regularly

- support their child's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum
- not expect the School to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school

7.3 Parents/carers will be expected to:

- notify Bramfield House School on the first day of absence by either telephoning the school and speaking directly to a member of the admin team or by emailing Carl Poppy, DSL Carl.Poppy@bramfieldhouse.co.uk
- ensure their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending review meetings and consultation, taking an interest in their child's work and activities
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life. Bramfield House School will endeavour to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

8. Pupils' Responsibilities

- 8.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their form tutor, Key worker or other responsible adult.
- 8.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring each pupil reaches their maximum academic attainment.
- attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
 - schools and the Local Authorities have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children, the best way to safeguard children is to ensure that they attend school regularly
 - good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
 - membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others

- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

10. Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to adjust to the school's daily routine; catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.