



**Brunswick House**  
Primary School



## **Attendance Policy**

**Ratified: November 2023**  
**Next Review: November 2024**  
**Reviewed By: Full Governing Body**

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#### **1. DfE Attendance guidance (2022)**

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.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1099677/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

#### **2. Statement of Intent**

Brunswick House Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Brunswick House Primary School.

### 3. Timeline of school action for non-attendance

Percentage	School Action	Including
95-100%	Prevention	Assemblies, displays
90-95%	Early Intervention	Monitoring by Attendance Officer, parental meetings, in-school intervention and external agencies.
Less than 90%	Targeted	Monitoring by Attendance Officer and Head Teacher, home visits, external agencies (such as Local Authority School Liaison Officer, Inclusion and Attendance Service).

Attendance is continually monitored during the academic year

- Attendance letters informing each adult responsible for the care of the child of poor attendance are sent as part of this monitoring.
- If attendance does not improve, parents are then invited to a meeting in school with the Head teacher and the attendance officer.
- Responsible adults (parents/carers) may be referred to the attendance service or, a penalty notice referral may be made where the absences have not been authorised and the referral criteria has been met.

### 4. Parental Responsibility

All responsible adults for a child have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the responsible adults' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. They should notify the school using the StudyBugs application, by phoning the school office before 9.00am on 01622 752102, option 1 or an email can be sent to [absence@brunswick-house.kent.sch.uk](mailto:absence@brunswick-house.kent.sch.uk). This is a safeguarding issue, the school needs to know that your child is safe.

If a child is absent for more than 1 day, then you should report the absence **every** day. If notification isn't received on each day of absence, you will receive a notification letter for 'absence without reason' before the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

#### **Punctuality**

Our school gates are open from 8.45am until 8.58am. This allows sufficient time for all pupils to get to their classroom.

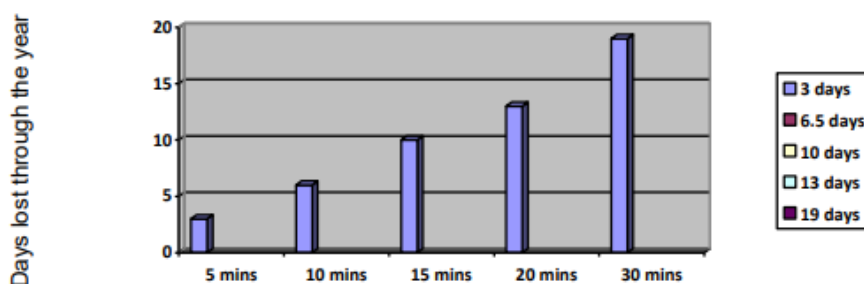
Pupils are expected to arrive in their classroom by 9.00am. All pupils that arrive late **must** report, **with** their responsible adult to the school office where the reason for lateness and number of minutes late is recorded.

If your child arrives between 9.01am and 9.15am they will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.15am, pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

If your child has still not arrived, or a message been received about their absence after the register has closed; a Parent Alert will be sent via our StudyBugs platform requesting a reason for your child's absence.

The following graph clearly illustrates how being late can add up to a loss of learning:



Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents at Parent Consultation evenings and may be referred to the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and/or School Liaison Officer (SLO). Letters will be sent to parents if 5 or more episodes of lateness are recorded. Persistent lateness after the register closes can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness – Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from April 2017.**

- Persistently late (Coded U) for 10 or more sessions after the register has been closed during any possible 100 school sessions for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, Penalty Notice(s) may be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings

For more information on Kent's attendance policies, procedures and support they offer please visit, <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-attendance>

## **5. Authorising Absence**

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent/carer's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. You may be asked to provide medical evidence of your child's absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

Advance notification of appointments should be submitted to the school office via the Leave of Absence form (**appendix 1**) along with a copy of the appointment card/letter, screen shot of text message or "with compliments" slip that states your appointment time. This can also be emailed to [absence@brunswick-house.kent.sch.uk](mailto:absence@brunswick-house.kent.sch.uk) 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. Where an appointment is local, the school can only authorise half an hour either side of the appointment for travel time. For this reason, children should attend school before and after their appointment to ensure that they miss the least amount of learning time possible.

If no explanation along with supporting evidence is received, absences **will not** be authorised.

The Head teacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance by the parent/main carer and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Supporting documents should be submitted e.g. letter from employer, doctor etc.). Requests should include reasons why the leave cannot be taken out of term time. Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head teacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The following reasons are some examples of absence that **will not** be authorised (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of sibling if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates.
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays/Days out

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in a request for a statutory attendance intervention to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child’s Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed request for a statutory attendance intervention referral form with any other relevant information.

## **6. Leave of absence/holiday**

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Head Teacher’s ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- due to religious observance
- due to failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

**Exceptional Circumstances** - Family holidays, for whatever reason, **cannot** be approved, even if the parent is unable to take time off work at any other time. An "exceptional circumstance" would have to be defined as an unavoidable cause e.g., a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

**Requests for holidays in term time will not be authorised.**

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority. There is no right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice because the authorisation of absence is the sole responsibility of the Head teacher.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Leave**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence or where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- Absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive.
- The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period a Penalty Notice will be issued by Kent County Council (one per responsible adult per child)

## **7. Persistent/Severe absence**

The definition of a **persistently absent** (PA) pupil as set out by the DfE is a pupil with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). The table below, derived from the census guidance, gives an indication of the minimum number of sessions a pupil would miss by each term to be classed as PA.

<b>Term</b>	<b>10%</b>
Term 1	7 or more sessions
Term 2	14 or more sessions
Term 3	20 or more sessions
Term 4	25 or more sessions
Term 5	31 or more sessions
Term 6	38 or more sessions

The definition of a **severely absent** (SA) pupil as set out by the DfE is a pupil with 50% or more absence (50% or less attendance). If your child's attendance is below 50% the School Liaison Officer would become involved.

As a school, we collect attendance data on our management information system, SIMS. As per legal requirements, this data is shared with the local authority and nationally. Internally, we

check this data on a weekly basis to look for patterns of absence across the school and at an individual level with a particular focus on those pupils in danger of being classed as PA. The Attendance Officer and Head teacher will then monitor these pupils and try to work with families to improve attendance.

This data is then monitored by our Attendance Governor on their termly visit and data is shared with the Governors in an anonymous way. Attendance of pupils that have a history of poor attendance, who are in receipt of free school meals or are vulnerable are a focus of this monitoring. From this the school keep a record of identified children. The identified children are the focus of action and intervention and are discussed at meetings with our SLO. These identified children become a daily or weekly focus to ensure improvement. The school are committed to working with parents/carers to help solve attendance issues and ensure regular attendance. As parents/carers have accepted a place at our school, it is an expectation that parents/carers will be committed to ensure attendance is as high as possible and pupils are always punctual.

## **8. Children Missing from Education (CME)**

In order to prevent children from becoming Missing in Education, the school is legally required to notify the Local Authority of all children removed from our registers outside normal transfer times whatever the reason. Parents/carers are requested to provide the school with all the necessary information about future addresses or new schools in the event of planned changes of address etc. Any information the school holds will be passed on to the relevant school or local authority as required.

The school will notify the Local Authority's School Liaison Officer that a child is to be considered CME if:

- A child leaves the school to attend another school and notification of the new school place is not received after ten school days.
- An absence is agreed and the pupil does not return after the agreed time, any additional absence will be classed as unauthorised and if they have not returned within 10 school days of the expected return date, the Education Service will be notified. This may result in your school place being withdrawn.

## **9. Celebrating attendance**

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents/carers in order to ensure the highest levels of attendance possible are achieved.

Our school attendance target at Brunswick House is 97% or above. This is celebrated in the following ways:

- Awarding a sticker for each full week of 100% attendance to each individual child to put on their attendance chart. Once four have been collected these can then be exchanged for a 'prize'
- Awarding certificates to the classes in each key stage with the highest attendance each week
- Ice cream party/celebration for the class with the highest attendance each term

- Anyone who achieves over 97% each term will be entered into a draw to win a big family day out at the end of the school year (funded by PTA)
- Attendance badges for 97% and above attendance at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms
- Attendance teddy bear prize and certificate for each person achieving over 97% for the school year (in July)

## 10.The Role of the School Staff

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy fairly and consistently. Pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance should be considered.

It is recognised that school attendance and safeguarding are inextricably linked. Therefore, all staff members have a statutory duty to ensure their registers are completed on time.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Including</b>
Head teacher	Whole School	Data and reporting Accountability Parent meetings Liaise with AO
Deputy Head for Inclusion	Targeted Students	Liaise with AO Liaise with Internal agencies Organise reduced timetables Parent meetings
Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSL)	All Students	Liaise with AO Liaise with External agencies Parent Phone calls
Attendance Officer	All students	Data and reporting Records kept up to date Daily attendance messages via StudyBugs after register closes. Letters to parents Attendance coding Weekly and Termly attendance analysis Home Visits Parent meetings Liaise with internal and external agencies
Family Liaison Officer (FLO)	Targeted Students	Liaise with AO Home visits Parent phone calls/meetings Liaise with external agencies/referrals
Class Teacher		Complete class register by 9.05am and by 1.15pm (KS1) and 2.15pm (KS2). (Attendance code / and \ for



		pupils who are present and N for absent) Liaise with AO any concerns about attendance Deliver key messages to students in class
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Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each day consists of two sessions, meaning two registration marks. A copy of your child’s registration document will be given at both Parent’s evenings and also in the end of year report.

Please see **appendix 2** for details about the registration coding used at Brunswick House.

## 11. Role of the Local Authority

The local authority (Kent County Council), statutory safeguarding partners and other local partners have a crucial role in supporting pupils to overcome barriers and ensure all children can access the full-time education to which they are entitled. Local authorities are facilitators of wider support needed by individual families and schools to overcome barriers in the short term. They are also strategic leaders that work across a geographical area to remove barriers in the longer term.

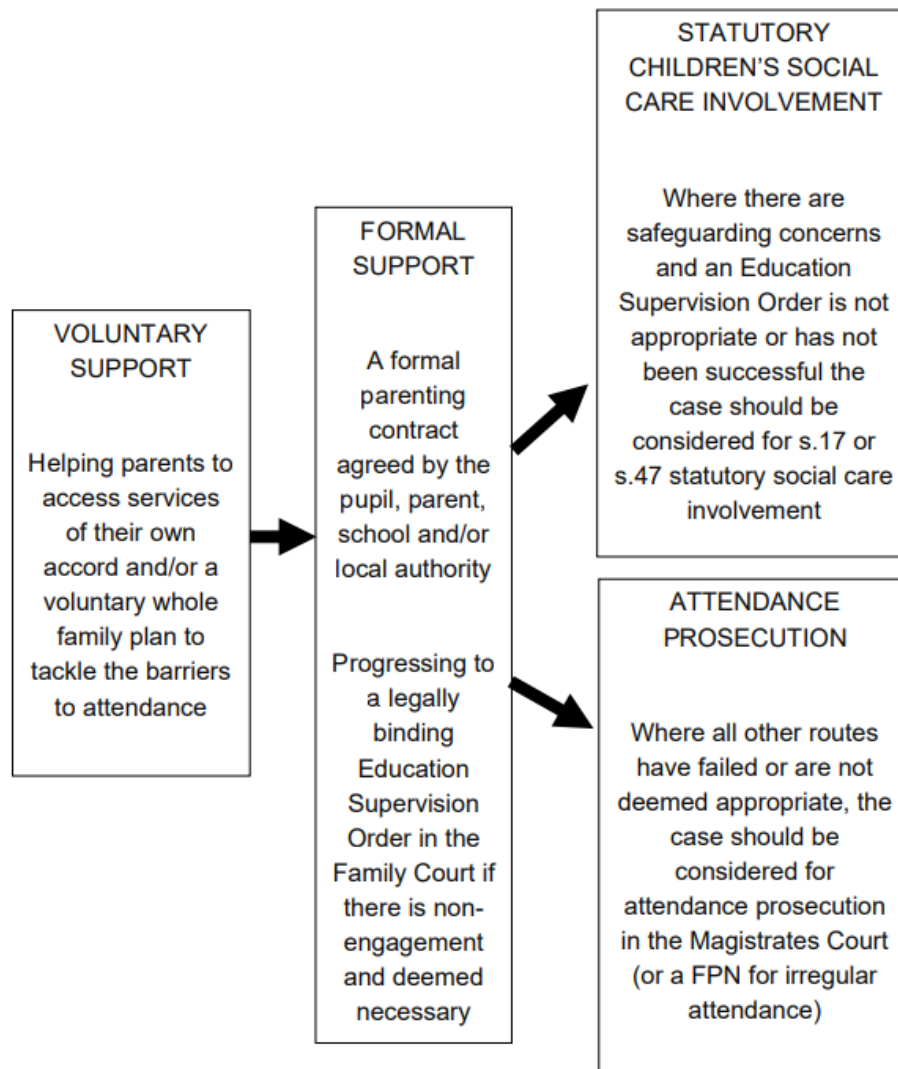
As a minimum, however, all local authorities are expected to:

- **Rigorously track local attendance data** to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Have a **School Attendance Support Team** which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):
  - **Communication and advice:** regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
  - **Targeting Support Meetings:** hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
  - **Multi-disciplinary support for families:** provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
  - **Legal intervention:** take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
  - Monitor and improve the **attendance of looked after children with a social worker** through their Virtual School.

## 12. Legal Intervention

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, schools, trusts and local authorities should always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law

protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.



Schools, and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

*The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child affirms that every child has a right to education. The purpose of education is to enable the child to develop to his or her fullest possible potential and to learn respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.*

# Appendix 1



## APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME



Student Name		
Class	Today's Date	
Date leave is requested	Date from:	Date to:
If less than one day put in times	Time from:                      am/pm	Time to:                              am/pm
Total Number of school days requested		
Reason for taking time off during term time		Please tick
Medical - <i>Please attach an appointment card or with compliments slip</i>		
Dental - <i>Please attach an appointment card or with compliments slip</i>		
Optician - <i>Please attach an appointment card or with compliments slip</i>		
School Visit – <i>Please provide details and reason for the visit</i>		
Time off for Religious Observance – <i>Please provide details</i>		
Other - <i>Please specify and provide any supporting documents</i>		
<p><i>Going to school every day is an essential part of your child's education. Pupils learn new things at school every day – missing school simply puts them behind and can hinder their life chances.</i></p> <p><i>At Brunswick House Primary School, we expect Pupils to be at school, on time and ready to learn for every day of the academic year. We expect every child to achieve 97% minimum for attendance. Pupils who have an absence of just 3% miss approximately 5% days of schooling per year.</i></p> <p><i>Please consider these implications carefully before taking your child out of school during term time.</i></p>		
Parent signature:		

### OFFICE USE ONLY

Evidence Attached <input type="checkbox"/>	Evidence Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Evidence Seen <input type="checkbox"/>
Entered onto SIMS	Yes/No	Code used:
Request approved by Head teacher	Yes /No	
Not approved by Head teacher	Yes /No	
Penalty Notice request	Yes /No	
Notes:		

## Appendix 2

### Attendance Coding

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. present at another school or PRU)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes or descriptions)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience (not work based training)	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances