



Brookfields School

Attendance Policy (Draft)

Date	Description
Due for approval 18 September 2024	To be approved by the Full Governing Board

Review schedule	Annually
Next review	September 2025
Policy holder	James Gearing

BROOKFIELDS SCHOOL EQUALITIES STATEMENT

All pupils at the school are offered a broad, balanced, stimulating and relevant curriculum regardless of their background, culture or ability. Each pupil is valued for who they are and what they bring to the school. We appreciate and celebrate the richness of diversity within the school community as well as the wider community. Through the work we do across the school on developing Values, we actively promote the importance of tolerance, co-operation, courage, determination, friendship and respect. Through this approach, pupils develop independence, confidence and integrity which prepares them for their future lives.

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Our aim is for all our pupils to attend school as much as possible, taking into account individual needs and situations.

We have pride in our curriculum and provision offers, and we want our pupils to take advantage of these by attending school throughout the year on the agreed term dates.

We are committed to our obligation with regards to school attendance and the value of good attendance, which is evident in our school culture and ethos.

We strive to have high attendance rates for our pupils through;

- Maintaining strong and effective working relationships with families
- Promoting good attendance, and, where applicable, allowing our pupils to understand why attending school is important for them long-term
- Implementing measures to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

This policy will outline the responsibility for the school and families to ensure that attendance at Brookfields School is the best it can be. It will outline the strategies used by the school, alongside West Berkshire Council, to support and improve attendance to maintain the best educational outcomes for all pupils whilst taking into account their health and wellbeing. We want all pupils to attend school regularly to take advantage of all the educational opportunities available to them.

Taken from 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

(Department for Education, February 2024 – see appendix B for more details)

Pupils are expected to (where developmentally appropriate):

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive at school on time and ready to engage with learning.
- Tell a trusted adult if there is a problem that might affect their school attendance.

Families are expected to:

- Actively support the work of the school, treating all members of school staff with respect.
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve any issues that may lead to non-attendance, and ask for help from the school when they need it.
- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance, and book holidays outside of term-time only.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

Schools are expected to:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and families understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance, and empower all staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on, and report this data to the governors regularly and where appropriate.
- Liaise with the appropriate officials at local authority level to engage in conversation around improving attendance for all pupils, as well as specific cases of concern.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. At Brookfields School this is:
James Gearing (jgearing@brookfields.w-berks.sch.uk)
Assistant Headteacher & Pastoral Care Lead

The school governing body is expected to:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Use data to understand patterns of attendance, compare with other local schools, identify areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.

- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.

Local authorities are expected to:

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.
- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.

The school record every pupil's attendance using the SIMS registration system.

Attendance registers are completed timely and accurately by either the teacher, or the learning support assistant (LSA) twice a day – once in the morning upon arrival (registers close at 9.30am) and once following lunch (registers close at 1.30pm)

Pupils are expected to be onsite by 9.00am. As many of our pupils arrive by school in arranged transport, this is not usually a problem however they are all realistically in their classrooms by 9.15am. If being accompanied to school by family, staff will greet pupils at designated areas and transition them to their classrooms by 9.15am.

If a pupil is absent and a reason is provided by family, this will be passed on to the pupil's class team for effective registration or recorded directly onto the register by the office team. Please see [Appendix A](#) for registration codes.

Any pupils arriving after 9.30am without valid reason for absence will be marked as late (if they attend school later in the day) or as an unauthorised absence until a reason is provided by family.

A normal school day ends at 3.00pm, where pupils will leave the school site.

In the event that pupils are late in leaving site on arrange transport **past 3.30pm**, the office will inform families.

Unauthorised Absence

Any pupils arriving after 9.30am without valid reason for absence will be marked as late (if they attend school later in the day) or as an unauthorised absence until a reason is provided by family.

- If no reason is given, or further information is required, a phone call is made to families in the first instance (or by text, email or letter if unable to make contact). A home visit may also be required;
 - To ensure safeguarding, if absence continues without explanation, or if further information is needed, a home visit may be carried out.
 - Home visits are not pre-arranged and can be made at any time, as required, at the discretion of the school. Staff will always carry identification and will expect to see the child in question, if only briefly, to ascertain how they are. The home visit may be undertaken by a member of senior or extended leadership team, the pastoral team or the pupil's class team.
- Once sufficient information has been gained, an absence code is determined by the appropriate member of staff in line with DfE guidance in Working Together to improve school attendance (2022). This decision is based on the information provided by families when the child's absence is reported and will influence whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- The school will then form a strategy including the family to work on increasing attendance and avoiding unauthorised absences in the future. This plan may be shared with the education welfare officer within the local authority.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Where a parent has provided no explanation or the explanation given is not deemed to be valid, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Leave of absence in term time

Families must get permission from the Head Teacher in order to take their child out of school during term time. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion provided that:

- A completed application form is submitted in advance
- There are exceptional circumstances

Families should plan holidays within the school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless absolutely unavoidable.

Families should be aware that an unauthorised leave of absence of 10 sessions or more can result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice, served per parent, per child from the local authority.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. (Fines that are not paid may result in a prosecution).

- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. Instead a prosecution, or other legal intervention, will be considered

This penalty system was updated in July 2024, and more details can be found in the document [School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (see [Appendix B](#))

Absences will be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Headteacher due to exceptional circumstances.
- The pupil is ill (and there is no reason to doubt the legitimacy of this claim). If there is ongoing medical treatment which could mean a hospital stay, or a period of time at home longer than a week, the school ask to be informed of this as early as possible so we can work with families to maintain both educational and pastoral support as much as is possible and appropriate.
- The parent notifies the school of a medical or dental appointment (which could not be made outside of school hours).
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's family belongs, or if the pupil is at the developmental stage to make this decision themselves.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller families who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision.
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Where a parent has provided no explanation or the explanation given is not deemed to be valid, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

We regularly monitor cases where attendance is below 97%. In cases where absences are increasing, actions are taken which aim to prevent children becoming or remaining a 'persistent absentee' (<90%).

Any pupils where attendance falls below 97% will be discussed regularly in safeguarding and attendance meetings by the senior leadership team, and may be shared on a case-by-case basis with the educational welfare officer designated to the school by the local authority. For some cases, the education welfare officer may wish to speak with families directly or join members of the school team on a home visit to the family.

Supportive actions may include:

- Regular contact with the family via text message, email or telephone
- Supportive conversations and/or regular check-ins with the pupil (where appropriate)
- A staged letter system to inform families of attendance concerns; first letter to indicate concern for a decline in attendance; second letter with an action or target to improve attendance
- Individual support plans in place for pupils (where appropriate) to allow them to take responsibility for their attendance, written in conjunction with families
- Meet with pupils and families and create a SMART plan of action & review regularly
- Share plans & meeting notes with families
- Engage with relevant external agencies involved
- If these actions have been taken and attendance fails to improve a referral will be made to the Local Authority Education Attendance Service

Safeguarding

It is recognised that poor attendance may be a sign or symptom of a wider safeguarding issue that requires further support (this could include but is not limited to domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, substance misuse, or financial strain). Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, action will be taken in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils, it is recognised that some individual pupils, or pupil cohorts, may experience additional barriers to attendance. In such cases, any specific needs will be considered and, where appropriate, adaptations made.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, the local authority, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect.

Formal and legal intervention

Brookfields School and the Local Authority will seek to resolve any attendance concerns by working together to support the family with improving a pupil's attendance. Where this is not successful, or where families do not engage with support, then more formal procedures may be followed. If this is the case, families will always be aware as much as possible. Social services / child protection services may also be referred to in order to form a concise plan and to protect the young person.

Support back into school following periods of absence, and reduced timetables

Pupils who have been excluded or have had periods of absence due to ill-health or truancy should receive appropriate support to return to school, build confidence and bridge the gaps in their learning. These plans are drawn up in collaboration with parents and the pupil.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to introduce a reduced timetable for pupils. This may be because;

- Medical need for a reduced school day (eg. fatigue, recovery time)
- Poor mental health is affecting the pupil and they are finding it hard to attend regularly (eg. anxiety)
- A dual / split timetable is in place as education onsite may not be the best option for the pupil (eg. community access through a different provision, concerns around safety onsite)
- Issues with transportation

We will always aim for the introduction of a reduced timetable to be a short-term measure, with a timeframe for monitoring and review.

Reduced timetables are agreed with families, but also in conjunction with the local authority. The local authority advise a maximum of 6 weeks for a reduced timetable to be in place, however we find that sometimes it takes longer for our pupils to build up to change and so sometimes reduced timetables need to be in place for longer in order for them to be effective. If this is the case, this will always be communicated to families.

APPENDIX A – REGISTRATION CODES

Please refer to [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk), page 76 onwards for the full definition of codes available.

Code	Meaning	Criteria	Statistical Value
/\	Present at school AM / PM \	Must be in school at registration (pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration)	Attending (Present)
L	Late arrival before register is closed	The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed. (All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes)	Attending (present)
K	Attending Education provision arranged the Local Authority (LA)	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 (exceptional provision of education), section 42(2), or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014 (special educational provision off site).	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
V	Attending an Educational visit or trip	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff. The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
P	Participating in a Sporting Activity P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
W	Attending Work Experience	Attending work experience please see guidance for additional information	Attending an approved educational activity (present)
B	Attending any other approved Educational Activity	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. <i>The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded</i>	Attending an approved educational activity (present)

D	Dual Registered at another school Relevant regulation 10(4) Table 3	The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered.	This code is classified for statistical purposes as not a possible attendance to avoid double counting.
C1	Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad	All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours.	Authorised absence
M	Leave of absence for Medical or dental Appointment	Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school’s agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	This interview must take place during the session for which it is recorded.	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for Studying for public examination	Study leave should not be granted by default once tuition of the exam syllabus is complete and should be used sparingly. If schools do decide to grant study leave, provision must still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.	Authorised absence
X	Non – Compulsory School age pupil not required to attend school	Where the pupil is absent when timetabled to attend the school, the absence must be recorded using the appropriate absence code not code X.	Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent)
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable	All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil’s best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs in line with paragraphs 67 – 70 of Working together to improve school attendance.	Authorised Absence

C	Leave of absence exceptional circumstances	All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. It must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes.	The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.	Authorised absence
R	Religious Observance	<p>The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves).</p> <p>As a general rule, 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' is a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.</p> <p>If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C.</p>	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical appointment)	The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.	Authorised Absence
E	Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision made	The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.	Authorised Absence
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend the school because a local authority has a duty set out in regulation 10(12) or (13) to make access arrangements to enable the pupil's attendance at school and have failed to do so	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available.	Not a possible attendance

		<i>Walking distance in relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or above, means 3 miles. In each case measured by the nearest available route.</i>	
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption	The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency.	Not a possible attendance
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed Relevant regulation 10(10)	Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed. <i>This code may not be used for any planned closure such as weekends or holidays</i>	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention Relevant regulation 10(14)	The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in police detention, • remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • detained under a sentence of detention. 	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or • prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease. 	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session	Not a possible attendance

		<p>in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause.</p> <p>Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6)).</p>	
G	Holiday not granted by school	The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.	Unauthorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	<p>Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has not yet been established before the register closes, the absence must be recorded with code N.</p> <p>Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session</p>	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.	Unauthorised absence
U	<p>Arrived in school after registration closed</p> <p>Relevant regulation 10 (7) and (8)</p>	<p>Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.</p> <p>Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes.</p>	Unauthorised absence
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.	This code is not collected for statistical purposes.
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance	This code is not collected for statistical purposes

[Brookfields School - Policies and Documents](#)

Guidance and legislation documents

[Human Rights Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[New regulations for schools in next stage of attendance drive - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[School attendance: improving consistency of support \(education.gov.uk\)](#)

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

1	8(1)(a) - where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
2	8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school.
3	8(1)(c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4	8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
5	8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.
6	8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
7	8(1)(g) - that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

8	<p>8(1)(h) - that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and —</p> <p>(i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);</p> <p>(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</p> <p>(iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</p>
9	<p>8(1)(i) - that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.</p>
10	<p>8(1)(j) - that the pupil has died.</p>
11	<p>8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and—</p> <p>(i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or</p> <p>(ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.</p>
12	<p>8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.</p>
13	<p>8(1)(m) - that he has been permanently excluded from the school.</p>
14	<p>8(1)(n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.</p>
15	<p>8(1)(o) where—</p> <p>(i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy;</p> <p>(ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and</p> <p>(iii) those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.</p>

Excerpts taken from ‘West Berkshire Schools Attendance Meeting’ 15.7.24

