Badgerbrook
Primary School

Learning, achieving and celebrating together.

Attendance Policy

2024 - 2025

Approved by:	Advisory Board	**Date:**	November 2024
Last reviewed on:	November 2024		
Next review due by:	November 2025		

Contents

1. Aims

Badgerbrook Primary 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 will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school advisory board – 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.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

> - Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
> - Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
> - Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), working together to improve school attendance from (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:

> - Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
> - Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
> - Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
> - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
> - 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Advisory Board

The Advisory board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> - The implementation of this policy at the school
> - Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Advisory Board, DSAT Central Team and Senior Leadership Team
> - Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
> - Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The SLT member responsible for Attendance

The attendance leader is responsible for:

> Overseeing, directing and co-ordinating the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school
> ensure attendance data is up-to-date and issues are shared with the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team
> Information is made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that the Advisory Board is fully aware of attendance data and targets
> Meets with the Attendance Officer regularly to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

> Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
> Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
> Works with education welfare officers, LEA, court officers, Inclusion Team, CME and PME units to tackle persistent absence
> Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
> Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

3.7 All school staff

All staff (teaching and support) at Badgerbrook School will:

> support and promote excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our 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.

3.8 All Parents and Carers

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 Badgerbrook Primary School.

Parents will also be expected to:

> ensure their children attend the school regularly
> support their children'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
> Notify school on the first day of absence using the school's absence telephone line
> School email (office@dsatbadgerbrook.org) or reporting to the school office
> ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day
> work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their children's work and activities

> contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Badgerbrook Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers. The attendance officer will complete the register using the prescribed codes (See appendix 1)

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once at the beginning of the second session which is in the afternoon (after lunch). It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Late
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment (See Appendix 1)

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 When registration takes place

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once at the beginning of the second session which is in the afternoon (after lunch).

The registers will close at 9.00am for the morning session and 12.50pm (EYFS, Y1,2,3) and 1.10pm (Y4,5,6) for the afternoon session. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will be marked as absent. A child will be marked as late up until 9.30pm. Any child arriving after 9.30am will be marked with a U which means absent for the morning session.

4.3 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by **9:30am** or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

If a parent does not notify the school to confirm the reason for the unplanned absence, we will make contact by telephone or text message to understand why your child is not in school. This will help to identify at an early-stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised.

4.4 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents may be asked to provide evidence that they are taking their child out of school for a medical appointment. This is to ensure that the appointment can be authorised.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late.

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

> After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, follow up action will be taken which could result in legal action by the Local Authority.

Pupils / students who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office and will be recorded using the visitor portal in reception. They will then be marked as late.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure**.

For the same reason, it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment) or returning to school later in the day, inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

4.6 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 potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Badgerbrook School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will make contact with his/her parents immediately and will notify the police if necessary.

4.7 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

> Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by calling parents to understand why a child has not been in school
> Write to you if we are concerned about your child's attendance to alert you to a concerning emerging pattern or level of absence
> invite parents into a meeting to discuss the reasons for absence and plans put in place to support improving the attendance of the pupil. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them
> where parents do not engage, the absence will be considered unauthorised and could contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued.
> Refer to Leicestershire County Council inclusion team

The school will also:

> Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
> Identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use

Children at Risk of Missing Education

Badgerbrook Primary School will put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions. Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, Badgerbrook will hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. Where staff have concerns about a child, they will use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

4.8 Reporting to parents

We will report pupil attendance to parents at the following times:

> At parents evening in the Autumn and Spring term
> In the pupils ends of year report
> In newsletters and whole school displays
> Upon the request of the parents
> Where attendance drops below the expected threshold set by the school, parents will be notified by letter

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
> a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a license 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
- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence, which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions
- the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) away from school and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority
- in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period.**
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence could be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil or parents are shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

5.2 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

5.3 Absences after close of class registers

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the class teacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Headteacher.

5.4 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

5.5 Reducing persistent absence

A child is defined by the DfE as persistently absent if they miss 10 per cent or more of school time. It is necessary to monitor all pupils at regular intervals throughout the academic year. Pupils with attendance below 90% will be clearly identified and the reasons for their absences addressed using the range of support and statutory interventions available. Vulnerable groups e.g. pupils on free school meals within this range will be differentiated for additional monitoring and action.

Where the attendance falls below the expected standard, the school will:

> identify whether the reasons are authorised or unauthorised

> Send letters to make parents aware that their child is at risk of being persistently absent

> Meet with parents to discuss the pupil's attendance, understand the barriers for absence and put steps in place to support its improvement. Interventions could include in class support, specific day interventions, pastoral interventions, ELSA or behaviour interventions. These would be monitored over time to ensure that they have impact

> Work with the school's pastoral team to support school attendance

> Make a referral to the county inclusion team to provide attendance support

5.6 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Where any pupil has absences recorded as a result of an unauthorised family holiday, we are required to inform Leicestershire County Council who will issue penalty notices as set out below. This applies to any unauthorised leave of absence taken reaching a total of 5 days or more in any school year. Penalty notices can and will be issued for the following:

> a registered pupil has been absent for more than 20 sessions in any six week period, and
> the LA is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to show the parent has committed an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, and
> a formal warning of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued has been served giving a maximum of 15 school days to affect an improvement, and
> 2 penalty notices have not been issued in the past 12 months in respect of the child in question (if so alternative processes are necessary).

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, parents must pay £60 per parent, per child within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Badgerbrook School will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the absence.

Authorised leave of absence may be considered in the following circumstance:

> service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time
> when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

> cheaper cost of holiday
> availability of the desired accommodation
> poor weather experienced in school holiday periods

> overlap with beginning or end of term.

A response to all requests for a leave of absence will be made giving the reasons for the decision.
Leave of absence during periods of national tests, ie SATS will NOT be authorised.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Badgerbrook, we actively encourage pupils to attend school. All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. To encourage pupils to attend school we:

> Issue certificates for 100% attendance
> Celebrate class attendance that is over 96% each week in celebration assembly
> Have a whole school attendance competition with rewards at the end of each half term
> Actively promote good attendance in newsletters, parents evening and school reports
> Celebrate good attendance by displaying and celebrating individual and class achievements
> Regularly sending letters home updating you on your child's attendance and reminding you of your statutory duty and potential consequences if there is a failure in cooperation

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Attendance officer monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis. They also hold monthly meetings with the Attendance leader.

The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance e.g. FSM.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and Arbor) within the stipulated time frame.

7.2 Monitoring actions

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil is absent, and no reason has been given, school will contact their parent/carer (see 4.3).

Where a pattern of absence is identified, through monitoring, in the first instance, this will be discussed with the class teacher and letters will be sent to explain that this will be monitored over time and attendance should improve.

If a pupil's absence goes above 10 days within the year, the school will arrange to discuss this with the parent/carer of the pupil to ensure their attendance improves.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer or the local authority inclusion team.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. An action plan will be created and shared with families to ensure that attendance improves.

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

7.3 Managing and storing data

By law, registers must be kept for at least 3 years. Electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three years. The registers will be safely stored on an encrypted MIS system.

We collect and store attendance data using Arbor. This will be used internally for the following reasons:

> Track the attendance of individual pupils
> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
> Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 2 years by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Advisory Board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy
> Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 School Letters

Annex A: DfE Example letters and emails

These examples were developed in collaboration with Olive Academies, Unity Learning Partnership and Cabott Learning Federation.

General messages about the importance of attendance

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

We need your help, please.

{Pupil Name} has been absent for {#} days of school, which is equal to {#} lessons missed so far this school year.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At _____school we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on {Pupil Name} absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that {Pupil Name} comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this – please call or come in and meet {Pupil Name}'s class teacher or tutor if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have ongoing concerns about your child's attendance.

Kind regards

Attendance Guide for Parents/Carers

Newsletter content to showcase attendance expectations

What YOU must do:

Try to telephone the school before 8.30am each day of your child's absence.

Tell the school in advance, of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters.

If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival.

Have a backup plan for if your child misses transport, call on a family member, neighbour or friend.

If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance, then talk to us as a first step so we can help!

What WE will do:

Check your child's attendance every day.

Phone home to discuss your child's attendance with you.

Invite you into school for attendance meetings if we are concerned.

If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we may make a welfare home visit.

Absence due to lateness

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

We have noticed that {Pupil Name} is often absent in the mornings.

We know that mornings can be difficult for some pupils, and we are keen to help to improve {Pupil Name}'s attendance.

We would love to talk to you to discuss avenues for support to help {Pupil Name} attend school well. Please contact [insert staff member name and contact information] to make an appointment or arrange a phone call.

Kind regards