



## Attendance Policy

Signed:	
Chair of Trust Board:	Claire Delaney
Approved:	1 September 2020
Renewal:	Every Two Years
Review Date:	September 2022

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## 1.0 Bellevue Place Education Trust – Our Commitment

### Learn, Enjoy, Succeed

Every BPET child and staff member enjoys a broad (LEARN) and enriched (ENJOY) learning experience, enabling them to achieve far greater individual success (SUCCEED) than they might previously have thought possible.

### Our Mission

To grow hubs of like-minded, autonomous schools, well-supported, all of which combine academic rigour with highly enriched opportunities that deliver a personalised approach to education and exceptional outcomes for all.

### Our Difference

We are leading the way in delivering high quality education through a skills-based curriculum, applying the best of the independent and state sectors to deliver breadth of opportunity and pupil enrichment. We empower all our schools as individual entities that best meet the needs of the communities they serve and have a strong relationship with parents, who are our key partners in delivering the vision.

### Our Promise

Every child is an individual. Our role is to nurture pupils' potential through a personalised approach to learning. BPET children are happy, independent, confident all-rounders. We encourage a 'be interested and be interesting' attitude in children and staff alike. We don't just teach; we want our pupils to have a passion to learn. Our focus is on all pupils, regardless of background or academic ability, focusing on pupils with Special Educational Needs as well as those who are more able.

## 2.0 Introduction

The Trust, Local Advisory Board and staff in partnership with parents and pupils are committed to schools which serve the community and of which the community is proud.

The Trust, Local Advisory Board and staff firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end, all schools within the Trust will do all they can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the pupils in our care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and promptly resolved.

This policy applies to all schools within BPET. All schools will adopt this version of the policy in full, adapting their own attendance procedures (section 7). BPET schools use Arbor to log pupil attendance, monitoring where attendance dips below an acceptable level. Parents can expect to be questioned and challenged, if this occurs. The Trust will set an annual attendance target for all schools, which will usually be above national average as well as a persistent absence target to be below the national average.

## 3.0 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental](#)

[responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
  - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

**Research demonstrates that regular attendance is important for several reasons:**

- It leads to better progress, both socially and academically
- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- It leads to greater confidence and security for our children, which leads to better social progress
- It gives greater continuity to the learning process
- It makes the transfer to secondary school easier

**4.0 Expectations**

We expect that all pupils will:	We expect that all parents/ carers who have day to day responsibility for children will:	We expect that school staff will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend school regularly</li> <li>• Attend school punctually</li> <li>• Attend school appropriately prepared</li> <li>• Tell someone if there is anything that is preventing these actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities</li> <li>• Ensure that the child(ren) in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day</li> <li>• Ensure that they contact the school to explain the reason for absence whenever their child is unable to attend school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily</li> <li>• Monitor every pupil's attendance</li> <li>• Contact parents/ carers if a pupil fails to attend school and where no message has been received daily</li> <li>• Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence</li> <li>• Encourage good attendance</li> <li>• Provide a safe learning environment</li> <li>• Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the school on the first day of absence and send a note on their return to school</li> <li>• Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the Trust's expectations with regard to regular school attendance</li> <li>• Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service or address this with parents in an appropriate and effective way</li> <li>• Meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that they are consulted in all decisions that relate to them</li> </ul>
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## 5.0 Holidays

- We are always concerned when pupils miss school time as a result of holidays. Parents/carers need to complete a leave of absence form if they wish to take their child out of school during term time.
- Only in exceptional circumstances will holidays be authorised in term time and then only for a maximum of five school days at the Headteacher's discretion where there is a clear educational justification.
- Parents/carers will need to ask permission of the Headteacher before booking a holiday if the absence is unavoidable. If the Headteacher authorises a 5 day absence, any absence beyond this time will be coded as 'unauthorised'.
- If pupils miss extended periods of time, it is difficult for them to catch up. Proper understanding of schoolwork only takes place when the pupil is regularly in the classroom.

## 6.0 Unauthorised and Authorised Absences

- The Law allows some absences - for example, when a child is ill or there is a crisis such as bereavement in the family.
- Occasionally, there are other reasons or particular problems at home. We encourage parents/carers to let us know, so that we can deal with these sympathetically. Appointments during school time should be kept to an absolute minimum. It is unsettling for pupils to miss part of the school day. If parents/carers need to take their child out of school during the day, they must be collected from school. They cannot be allowed to go to the bus stop or surgery unaccompanied. Wherever possible, appointments should be made for outside school hours or in the holidays. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.
- 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
- Reasons such as a child's birthday, sleeping in late, having a haircut, buying a new pair of shoes, holidays abroad or shopping are not permitted.

## **7.0 Persistent Absence**

- 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.
- Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

## **8.0 Other Absences**

### **8.1 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling**

- Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance through the completion of a leave of absence form.
- Parents/carers must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they should discuss with the parent/carer the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.
- Where a child's attendance has fallen to below 90%, leave of absence is unlikely to be approved unless there are arrangements for the provision of an education tutor.
- Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

### **8.2 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport**

- Parents/carers of outstanding sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions through the completion of a leave of absence form.
- Headteacher's can apply their discretion as to whether to authorise this depending on the nature of the competition and the frequency of the absence. It is obviously vital to understand how learning will continue if absence occurs.
- Permission for a child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher, but this is not recommended to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

### **8.3 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families**

- Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return.

- To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. This results in the school retaining the Traveller child on the school roll while they are travelling and records the absence as authorised through the T code.
- Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

#### **8.4 Non-attendance due to Health Needs**

Children who cannot attend school because of health needs:

- Local Authorities, have a duty set out in Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and the DfE Statutory Guidance 'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs' (DfE, 2013. See appendix 1) to provide education for children who cannot attend school full time due to their medical needs.
- BPET schools provide support for their pupils with medical needs under their statutory duties as defined in 'Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school' (DfE, 2014). It is only when the pupil's medical condition becomes too complex to manage in school that the schools Local Authority policy would then apply.

#### **9.0 Encouraging Attendance**

At each BPET School, we encourage attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a welcoming and safe environment
- By delivering a skills-based curriculum, applying the best of the independent and state sectors to deliver breadth of opportunity and pupil enrichment
- Involving pupils in attendance through an attendance reward system
- By responding promptly to a pupil's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If a pupil arrives at school after the close of register (30 minutes after the start of the session) without a written or previously notified explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics and school attendance targets
- By celebrating good and improved attendance
- By monitoring pupils' attendance and informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance; arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the EWS or implementing relevant actions as agreed with parents if the irregular attendance continues.
- By reporting to the Board on a regular basis school attendance statistics.

#### **10.0 Attendance Procedures**

Please see the school specific policy

#### **11.0 Attendance Monitoring**

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

Each half term, the Headteacher will discuss the school's overall attendance and will identify specific pupils who cause concern in relation to either attendance or punctuality.

### **Reporting to parents**

Teachers will conduct a Structured Conversation with parents three times a year. After their talk, they will send a report to families which include attendance and a breakdown of authorised and unauthorised absences, as well as lateness.

### **12.0 Legal action to enforce school attendance**

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

- Parenting Order – this requires the parent/carer to attend parenting classes. The court will mandate what the parent/carer needs to undertake to improve the child's school attendance.
- Education Supervision Order - If the local authority thinks the parent/carer needs support getting their child to go to school but the parent is not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to assist the parent/carer in getting their child to school. The local authority can do this instead of prosecuting the parent/carer, or as well.
- School Attendance Order – A parent/carer can be issued with a School Attendance Order if the local council thinks the child isn't getting an education. The parent/carer has 15 days to provide evidence that they have registered their child with a school or that they are giving them home education. The order will require the parent/carer to send their child to a specific school and if they don't, they are likely to be prosecuted or given a fine.
- Fine – Parents/carers are individually fined by the local authority, which rises if the fine is not paid within 21 days. If parents/carers don't pay the fine after 28 days they can be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.
- Prosecution – a parent/carer could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court will also give the parent/carer a Parenting Order.

The school will need to ensure they follow all notifications required to enable these legal actions.

### **13.0 Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy statement will be reviewed bi-annually and updated in consultation with key staff, in line with current best practice as considered necessary.

### **14.0 Approval by the Bellevue Place Education Trust Board**

This policy has been formally approved and adopted by the BPET Board and will be reviewed every two years.