



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Number	0040		Policy Author	A Gurney
Date of Last Review	July 2023		Policy Ownership	Finance & Operations
Agreed by Governors	2022		Date of Next Review	July 2024

All student attendance queries and concerns should be raised via email to:

lowerattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk

upperattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk

or by phone to:

Lower - 01268 498881 or Upper – 01268 498882



1. Aims

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

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

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

The definition of parent for the purposes of this policy is in line with government guidance and extends to include all those with parental responsibility and those who care for or live with a child.

2. 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:

- 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 (Student 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 and [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk).

3. Roles and responsibilities

There is a designated a member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for attendance



Upper Academy
Zoe Spencer
zspencer@basildonacademies.org.uk



Lower Academy
Rhia Joseph
rjoseph@basildonacademies.org.uk

3.1 The board of trustees

The board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for all schools in the Trust 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:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Headteacher for the Lower Academy is Lou Sherman.

The Headteacher for the Upper Academy is Rebecca Rees.

3.3 The Senior Attendance Officer

The Senior Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the senior leader responsible for attendance
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Attendance Team

We have a non-teaching attendance team who work full time to support students and families with ensuring school attendance.

Attendance assistants are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information into Bromcom. They undertake regular checks to ensure roll call is accurate and play a proactive role in ensuring students attend school. They are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system, working to find solutions to return students to school as quickly as possible. They are also responsible for the administration of attendance, including letters, rewards and information giving.

Attendance Officers will ensure legal process is followed, provisions are in place to return students to school promptly after unavoidable absence and trends/patterns are identified. They will also provide interventions to return students promptly to school after a period of absence.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- 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 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

Students must arrive in school by 8:25am or 8:55am on each school day, depending on the start time of their year group:

Year 7 & 8 = 8:55am

Years 9 – 13 = 8:25am

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30am (or 9am for Year 7 & 8) and will be kept open for 30 minutes from this time.

The Academies are able to utilize 'U' codes for students who arrive after registration closes.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). They should continue to make contact daily to keep the school informed of the reasons for continued absence.

Parents/carers should contact the school by 8.30am each day their child is absent

Lower Academy - lowerattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk or via the 'contact us' form.

Upper Academy - upperattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk or via the 'contact us' form.

If no reason has been received for a child's absence, the Academy will initiate first day calling.

Parents/carers must provide medical evidence to support all absences due to illness or medical appointments. **Minor ailments such as sore throats, headaches, stomach aches, etc (as defined by the NHS) are not considered to necessitate time off school. Absences due to these reasons will not be authorised.**

If a student feels unwell during the school day, they should notify a member of staff. A member of the first aid team will assess them and, if they deem necessary, contact the parent to collect them.

Students should not call parents/carers to come and collect them. Parental collection without the school's consent will be deemed unauthorised.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides medical evidence (e.g. appointment card).

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent 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.

If a student is absent, it is their responsibility to liaise with subject teachers on their return to school to catch up on any missed work. Where absence has been agreed in advance, it is the student's responsibility to collect their work from the subject teachers prior to the absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student arriving late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code ('L')
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code ('U')

Students are expected to arrive to school at the following times:

Lower Academy			Upper Academy	
Year 7	08:55		Year 10	08:25
Year 8	08:55		Year 11	08:25

Year 9	08:25		Sixth Form	08:25
--------	-------	--	------------	-------

➤ Persistent lateness will be discussed at an attendance meeting. Parents are expected to attend.

4.5 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 to ascertain the reason
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteachers discretion. Term time holidays/leave of absence applications are not a parental right.

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)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Parents will be invited into school to attend a School Based Meeting to discuss their child's attendance if there are unauthorised absences.

If further unauthorised absences persist the Academy will make a referral to the Local Authority to see if legal action needs to be initiated.

If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent/carer for each child taken out of school. Failure to pay will lead to prosecution. Parents can be fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

5.3 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.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 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 student 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good relationships between Home and The Academies are essential in developing a rise in the level of attendance.

- First day absence contact shows the concern of the Academy. It enables problems to be dealt with immediately. Parents feel more able to ask for advice and assistance.
- Request to parents that they should inform the Academy immediately when they know their child will be absent. Phone, email, text, contact us form and in person are all appropriate methods of contact.
- The expectation is for parents/carers to inform the Academies on each and every day of absence by 8:30am. It is at the Headteacher's discretion to authorise absences.
- If no reasons are received within 30 minutes, The Academies will initiate First Day Calling and may conduct an unannounced home visit.
- Medical evidence will be requested for **all** absences for the academy to consider authorising the absence.
- Contact with parents through information about attendance e.g. through personal attendance target letters; website etc
- Regular internal truancy audits – spot checks on classrooms to identify internal truants and inform parents/carers.

Rewards and Incentives

- Rewards for 100% attendance.
- Attendance information read out in assemblies.
- Reward trips.

- Positive home school liaisons.

We may issue letters to parents/carers to praise good attendance or to raise concerns.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance team at our schools monitors student absence on a daily basis.

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

If a student's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-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 Trust board.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence

U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed
----------	----------------------------	---

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Working Together to Improve Attendance

Step 1: Expect

We aspire for all students to have high expectations across our academies, building a culture that all can and want to be in school. Readiness to learn is key and our non-teaching pastoral team are committed to removing any barriers to attendance and punctuality.

Step 2: Monitor

Our dedicated Attendance Team use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible, at individual and cohort level. Contact with parents/carers and if necessary, other agencies, will be made as soon as possible to resolve issues before they become entrenched.

Step 3: Listen & Understand

When a pattern is spotted, our Attendance Team will discuss with students and parents/carers. We will listen to help understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Step 4: Facilitate Support

We will help remove barriers in school, accessing early help for students and parents/carers where this is needed. This might include a whole family plan or individual referral where absence is a symptom of a wider issue.

Step 5: Formalise Support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable improvements in attendance to school. Depending on the circumstances, this could include support through a parenting contract or education supervision order via the local authority.

Step 6: Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working to improve school attendance, enforcing of school attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution can be sought in order to protect a student's right to an education.

Appendix 3: Sixth Form Procedures for Attendance and Lateness

1. Students are expected to attend all timetabled lessons, study sessions and interventions as directed by their Head of Year or the Head of Sixth Form.
2. In the case of illness, on the first day of absence parents/carers are expected to email upperattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk or call our Upper Academy Attendance Team by 8am (01268 498882)
3. Parents of a student who is absent without reason will be contacted. Reasons must not be limited to 'not well'
4. If a student is absent without suitable reason, catch up will be implemented by teaching staff and if repeated, and a parental meeting held
5. Persistent poor punctuality and absence will be addressed by the Head of Sixth Form and could result in loss of privileges or removal from courses
6. If a student needs to leave school early, parents/carers should email upperattendance@basildonacademies.org.uk
7. In the case of prolonged or repeated absences due to illness, students will be requested to provide medical evidence. If the situation continues, please be aware the school may contact parents to discuss the issue.
8. Absence from lessons and from school can impact a student's access to bursary payment. Timely return of paperwork for this is the responsibility of the student