



Boroughbridge High School & King James's School Federation

POLICY STATEMENT

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy last reviewed (date)	May 2026
Ratified by Governors (date)	May 2026
Next policy review due (date)	May 2027
Due for review by Governors (date)	May 2027
Staff Lead	Headteacher

MISSION STATEMENT:

Significant revisions since the last review:

Reviewed to produce a federated policy, removing specific school procedures but with an overarching approach to Attendance management

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WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE



Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. Working together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen; to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all parties can work together to resolve them



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



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 families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Section 1: Context

1.1 The purpose of this policy

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to securing regular school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#) (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance.

The Department for Education's [statutory guidance](#) emphasises that fostering regular school attendance requires a collaborative effort from everyone involved (DfE, 2024, p. 8). Therefore, this policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of schools and caregivers, providing a framework to create the best possible opportunities for pupils to maintain regular attendance.

This policy also aims to clearly communicate the school's expectations that pupils should attend school consistently and should only be absent when they are too unwell to attend, or in rare and exceptional circumstances agreed upon by both caregivers and the school as being entirely unavoidable and/or in the student's best interest.

1.2 What is meant by regular school attendance

The Department for Education's [statutory guidance](#) sets out that 'Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.' (DfE, 2024, p. 8).

School aspires all pupils to achieve 100% attendance but recognises that this may not be possible for every child. Therefore, school believes it is realistic to expect that pupils who are absent only when unwell can maintain attendance of at least 96%. This equates to missing no more than approximately six days across an entire academic year.

For the purposes of this policy, regular school attendance is defined as attending school **at least 96%** of the time, meaning **pupils should aim to miss no more than eight days per academic year**.

1.3 Summary of registration periods

Morning session:

- Pupils must arrive at school on time (King James School by **8.45am** and Boroughbridge High School by **8:50am**) otherwise they miss learning. These pupils will be **marked as present**.
- Pupils who arrive after 8:45am at KJS will be registered as **late**. This should always be avoided.
- Pupils who attend after the registration period has closed (King James School **9.15am** and Boroughbridge High School **9.20am**) will be marked absent but must still come to school to avoid missing learning.

Afternoon session:

- Pupils must arrive on time (King James School King James's School 1:15pm and Boroughbridge High School **1.30pm**)
- **Late** arrival to lesson (King James School after 1:20pm and Boroughbridge High School after 1.35pm), will be reflected in the register.

- Pupils who attend after the registration period has closed (King James School 1:50pm and Boroughbridge High School **2pm**) will be marked absent.

Reasons for absences (and the register code) will reflect available information for each registration period, and will be guided by [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (DfE, 2024, pp. 76 - 92) .

Section 2: Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations

2.1 The Governing Board

- The governing board is responsible for communicating high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and caregivers and holding the school's head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Where school take necessary legal action to secure regular school attendance for a pupil, the governing board will be notified at the earliest opportunity for their input.

They are also responsible for making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school, works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos, including making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, plus dedicated training to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data

2.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy at the school, and:

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices and initiating legal action, where necessary
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and caregivers through all available channels
- Leading and enabling a strong cultural approach to inclusion

2.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for championing and improving attendance across the school by setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, driven by a culture of inclusion.

The Designated Senior Leader is also responsible for:

- Decision making around authorised and unauthorised absences
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis.
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and making sure they are followed by all staff.
- Liaising with pupils, caregivers and external agencies, where needed, ensuring relationships are impactful
- Creating plans and coordinating targeted interventions with pupils, caregivers and relevant agencies focused on increasing school attendance
- Ensuring registers are completed in line with [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulation, 2024](#).

2.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher.
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher/ Senior Lead for Attendance when to consider issuing fixed-penalty notices.

2.5 Form tutors, teaching staff and non-teaching staff

Form Tutors and teaching staff are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions daily, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information at the beginning of each lesson via the school Management Information System.

All staff must complete the register within the first 5 minutes of a lesson starting.

All staff are responsible for upholding the school's culture of inclusion, tenaciously helping every child feel valued by the whole school community.

2.6 Caregivers

When caregivers enrol a child in school, they take on the responsibility of ensuring the child attends regularly, arrives on time, and is ready to learn.

To do this, they are expected to:

- Provide the school with at least 2 emergency contact details
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, notice should be provided to the school as soon as possible, with supporting evidence of the medical appointment provided (appointment reminder or letter)
- Not take holidays in term time

When an absence is unplanned and either unavoidable or in the best interest of the child, caregivers must inform the school before 8.45am on each morning of an absence, providing details of the absence and an expected return date. Further information is available on each school website.

To provide the best opportunity for students to be able to attend school regularly, caregivers are also asked to consider the impact of home routines, which significantly influence punctuality and school readiness. Caregivers can support their child by ensuring they get enough sleep and establishing a smooth, structured morning routine. Schools are available to offer non-judgmental support if caregivers find this challenging.

Taking an active interest in a child's school life—such as discussing their learning, assisting with homework, and attending school events—can help children feel more connected to their education. Open communication with teachers and attendance at meetings like parent consultations also strengthens the partnership between caregivers and the school.

If a child appears unhappy or anxious about school, caregivers should listen attentively, observe any changes in behaviour, and reach out to the school for support. Informing the school about significant life events or challenges enables staff to provide timely assistance tailored to the child's needs.

Being honest with the school about any barriers to attendance helps staff understand and effectively support families in overcoming these challenges.

Where caregivers wish to seek authorisation for a planned period of absence, a formal request should be made to the school with as much notice as possible. Please note that 'all schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation [11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)' (DfE, 2014. P.17).

Section 3: Responding to Absences

3.1 Authorised and Unauthorised absences

There are limited and exceptional reasons a pupil should be absent from school, for example, when they are too unwell to attend school. All schools follow the statutory guidance ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)) when considering whether to authorise an absence.

The type of absence needs to be correctly recorded in the register with the correct absence code, as the codes enable school to monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. This data also supports local authorities and the government develop a greater understanding of school attendance more broadly, as per [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (DfE, 2024, p. 76) .

As per the statutory guidance ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)), school must follow up all unexplained absences (DfE, 2024, p. 91) .Therefore, caregivers and students can expect their school to be curious about reasons for absence, and students and caregivers are required to be transparent about reasons for absences.

Caregivers are urged to only allow their child to be absent from school with agreement (authorisation) from school. Where unauthorised absences are impacted a child's regular school attendance, action will be taken by the school to increase school attendance, and caregivers are expected to work closely with school.

3.2 Planned and unplanned absences

- Illness and medical appointments:

All students are expected to attend school regularly unless they are too ill to do so. The NHS provides information on how ill is too ill to attend school [here](#) or by searching the internet for 'NHS guidance on how ill is too ill to attend school'.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides evidence of the appointment. However, we encourage caregivers 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.

- Leave During Term Time

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the student's previous attendance record will be considered. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the student can be away from school. The school will not grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays, adopting the DfE guidance which states that, "Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance".

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- During Year 7 when a student is settling into the school, unless certain exceptional circumstances apply, e.g. the death of a family member
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a student's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a student's authorised absence record is already above 8 percent for any reason

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a student out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

It is important to note that the statutory guidance (Working Together to Improve School Attendance) clearly sets out that 'all schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024' (DfE, 2014. P.17).

When unplanned absences are unaccounted for, and no information (from the caregiver) about the absence has been shared with the school by 8.45am, the school will telephone to try to ensure all absences are explained and to confirm the location and safety of a child.

If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may send the Attendance Officer to visit home as a Safeguarding check or contact the police if there are concerns. Wherever the school is concerned for the safety of a child, safeguarding procedures will be followed.

Where the absence is unplanned, but part of a wider health need, then the caregiver must still inform school of the absence as per the first day procedure unless otherwise agreed.

School will follow the statutory guidance (Working Together to Improve School Attendance) when considering whether to authorise an absence.

3.3 Preventing irregular school attendance

The school promotes attendance and punctuality through assemblies, letters, websites and boards around school, certificates and awards throughout the year are all implemented to promote regular attendance.

Data is collected and subsequently collated at intervals throughout the year, and this is used to guide interventions, targeting specific cohorts when deemed necessary. Data is shared with the DfE and the Local Authority in line with statutory expectations so that the national and local context can be understood.

Regular attendance reports are provided to form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).

Attendance figures are published for individual pupils in their school report and/or at the end of each term so that pupils and their caregivers are aware of attendance figures and can respond accordingly.

The Department for Education (DfE, 2024, p. 8) emphasises in their statutory guidance that fostering regular school attendance requires a collaborative effort from everyone involved. Therefore, the school will endeavor to maintain positive relationships with the community they serve, and with all third-party stakeholders.

All staff at school endeavor to know children well and proactively seek to build impactful and meaningful relationships with pupils, allowing them to respond early to concerns pupils or caregivers raise.

Support is available for all students struggling to attend school and help put in place via the Attendance Officer, Year Managers, Pastoral Officer, Family Liaison Officer (at King James's School) and SLT.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), barriers to regular school attendance which are related to the pupil's needs, will be addressed in collaboration with the family and any relevant external agencies to support that pupil being able to access their learning in school.

Where the school is concerned that there is a downward trend in attendance, caregivers and pupils (where appropriate) will be invited to meet and create plans to address barriers to attendance. Plans will be closely reviewed and amended to ensure they are impactful.

3.4 Responding to persistent and severe absence

According to government guidance, a pupil who **attends school less than 90%** of the academic year is classified as '**persistently absent**' (DfE, 2024, p. 45). This equates to missing approximately **16 days** in a single school year. Persistently absent pupils face a significantly greater negative impact on their learning and development, and this impact worsens as attendance decreases further.

When pupil attends **school less than 50%** of the time, they are classified as '**severely absent**' (DfE, 2024, p. 45). The consequences of such low attendance are particularly alarming and can have long-term detrimental effects on a student's education and well-being.

School will work with families and external agencies to understand and address any issues affecting attendance, both in and out of school. Consent will be sought where necessary to involve other agencies, including where there are safeguarding concerns. Regular school attendance can protect vulnerable

children from harm and so irregular school attendance is considered as part of school's safeguarding duties too.

Where a pupil is persistently or severely absent, interventions will be bespoke and rigorous to reflect the seriousness. All interventions will be collaborative: caregivers and students will be kept up to date with the school's concerns, attendance support plans and possible next steps so that the process of improving attendance is fair and accessible.

3.5 Accessing available legal intervention to secure regular school attendance

When a pupil has **missed 10 sessions of school in a 10-week rolling period**, and those absences are **unauthorised**, all schools **must** consider if a penalty notice is appropriate (DfE, 2024, pp. 56 - 57). Caregivers can access further information [here](#).

Where attendance is less than 90% and absences are not authorised, and school believe that legal intervention is the most appropriate course of action to secure regular school attendance for a pupil, they will communicate with the Local Authority and those caregivers with parental responsibility.

School is firmly committed to collaborating with caregivers to improve attendance but there are instances where legal action is considered in the best interest of the student. Children's right to a full-time education is underpinned by the law. Therefore, there are several different types of legal interventions designed to improve a child's school attendance, and these are set out in the DfE's [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (DfE, 2024). Most pupils will be supported without the need for formal legal action. Details of the different legal options available for all schools to consider can be found here.

Further details of

All schools have a duty to follow the DfE guidance, [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (DfE, 2024, pp. 47 - 61), when considering legal action.

Section 4: Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Section 5: Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.