



ATTENDANCE POLICY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Kemp".

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Signed – Head Teacher

Jonathan Kemp
Print Name

Date: September 2023

Review: July 2024

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Fixed Penalty Notices

September 2022

In light of changes to DfE Guidance which apply from September 2022 and are to become statutory in September 2023 Hertfordshire have amended guidance in relation to Fixed Penalty Notices.

The relevant change is highlighted in the following paragraph:

*Fixed penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where a fixed penalty notice is **deemed likely to change parental behaviour and** support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).*

The Hertfordshire Code of Conduct remains the same however to further underpin the principle of support first and improve the consistency of approach for pupils and parents across the country, subject to Parliament, the Secretary of State intends to introduce a national framework to replace individual codes of conduct ahead of the 2023-24 academic year.

Batchwood School Attendance Policy

1. MISSION STATEMENT

- 1.1** Batchwood School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise their true potential. **Our strategic objectives aim for an average rate of 95%.**
- 1.2** The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
- 1.3** All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.
- 1.4** The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- 1.5** To meet these objectives Batchwood School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.
- 1.6** Sally Smiles is the school's Attendance Officer. She will work with parents to keep open channels of communication with the aim of improving attendance across the school.

2. AIMS

1. To improve the overall percentage of students at school
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents/carers, teachers and governors
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students
5. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
7. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions
8. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Social Work Service and with other services and agencies
9. To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

3. PARENTAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. *Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance***
- 2. *Parents/carers are responsible for informing the school of the reason for any absence on the first morning of any absence, and every day thereafter***
- 3. *Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their children stay at school once they have registered***

4. REGISTRATION (INCLUDING LATENESS)

- 4.1 Registers will be taken punctually each day unless informed at 9am and at 12:30pm. Morning registers close at 09:20. Afternoon registers close at 1pm. Students should be in their tutor/teaching areas before these times and seated. If a student arrives after the registers close they should sign-in at the main office.
- 4.2 All staff should take a register in each lesson. If there is concern about a particular student's attendance an announcement will be made in morning briefing by the Attendance Lead, Sally Smiles or Designated Safeguarding Lead, Jo Murphy.

5. AUTHORISED / UNATHORISED ABSENCE

- 5.1 The school decides whether an absence will be authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval **in advance** for the student to be away, or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the school can do this. Should school staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine, the absence should be treated as unauthorised. This decision must be made and communicated to parents/carers by the school.

- 5.2 Absence from school **may** be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

Genuine sickness
Medical/dental appointments
Days of religious observance
Exceptional family circumstances, i.e bereavement

- 5.3 Absence from school **will not** be authorised for:

Unsatisfactory explanations (e.g. shopping, minding the house etc)
Caring for sick siblings or parents/carers
Birthdays

- 5.4 Batchwood School will emphasise to parents/carers that all medical/dental appointments should be made outside school hours where possible.

Parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays and should be advised to apply to the school for permission in advance of any such holiday. Forms can be obtained from main office.

6. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Persistent absence (PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee therefore if his attendance is less than 90%, regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised.

7. FIRST DAY RESPONSE

Batchwood operates a First Day Response system. Any student who is registered as absent without an explanation will receive a phone call to their parents/carers before 10.00am to report that their child is not at school. This will be followed up by a text message if the parent does not respond to provide a reason. It is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure they call the absence line to report any absence before the start of the school day. If no contact is received by 10:30, we will try to contact any additional emergency contacts for the child, before reporting them as missing to the appropriate agencies.

8. TRUANCY

Batchwood School recognises that a student may truant from school or particular lessons for a variety of reasons.

Truancy is recorded as an unauthorised absence. A number of systems are put in place to inform students that this behaviour is unacceptable. Through investigation, if necessary, support will be offered to the student who has truanted from a lesson. Parents/carers will always be informed and an appropriate sanction will be put in place. A record will be made for the student's file.

Spot attendance checks are made regularly. These may focus on a particular year group if there is a concern. All information will be fed back to the Pastoral Team and ultimately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Pastoral team and form tutor will be involved if there is a difficulty concerning a curriculum area. The student will be monitored.

Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice will be issued with regard to unauthorised absence if a student fails to attend school as required without a genuine explanation. A student's absence must have been unauthorised for a least 15 sessions (one session is half a day either am or pm) in the previous and/or current term. **Penalty Notices will involve a parent paying a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days.**

Failure to pay the fine within **28 days** will result in either a prosecution for the offence to which the notice applies, or withdrawal of the notice (limited circumstances apply). Prosecution will be taken by the Local Authority under the Education Act 1996, section 444.

The issuing of Penalty Notices will comply with the code of conduct and practice as determined by the Local Authority.

9. THE ROLE OF THE ATTENDANCE OFFICER

Daily:

1. Produce a daily Absence Report on SIMS
2. Make calls to students marked as absent
3. Record findings on Absence Report (SIMS) and take appropriate action
4. PM – Check the registers for absences

Weekly:

1. Produce attendance reports for the Headteacher
2. Percentage Attendance spreadsheet
3. Assist Headteacher in analysis of trends and appropriate strategies.

10. LOCAL AUTHORITY ATTENDANCE OFFICER

The fundamental purpose of the LAAO is to maximise attendance rates for individual students, individual schools and for the county of Hertfordshire as a whole and discharge the County Council's legal duty to ensure that all students of compulsory school age are in receipt of suitable education. LAAOs will also assist in removing barriers which may prevent a child receiving education.

Referrals to the LAAO will be made by the school once it feels it has exhausted all other avenues to improve attendance. The LAAO will meet with Attendance officer and home liaison manager during visits to the school to monitor students whose attendance is a cause for concern.

11. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY

In the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the Teaching and Learning is of a high standard and the curriculum meets their needs. This curriculum will be regularly reviewed:

1. The curriculum will be monitored and developed to meet the needs of all students.
2. Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices. These will be shared with the Headteacher.
3. The school will offer rewards to all students and tutor groups whose attendance/punctuality is either excellent or much improved.
4. Students whose attendance falls beneath 90% will be set targets for improvement. These targets will be regularly reviewed by the Attendance Officer/AIO and if deemed necessary the Headteacher.
5. Good attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded through weekly house points for a full week's attendance.
6. Regular structured meetings will be held with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those students whose attendance/punctuality is a source of concern.
7. Parents/carers will be kept regularly and fully informed of all concerns around attendance and punctuality.
8. Annual reports will be made by the Attendance Officer to the school's governing body on the issue of attendance/punctuality
9. Students are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance via tutor groups and Assemblies.
10. Students who have been absent for any extended period of time will be re-integrated back into school through a structured and individually-tailored programme.
11. All issues which may cause a student to experience attendance difficulties are to be promptly investigated by the form tutor/pastoral team. Attendance is reported in every student's report.
12. Prizes for excellent attendance will be rewarded at our annual award ceremony.

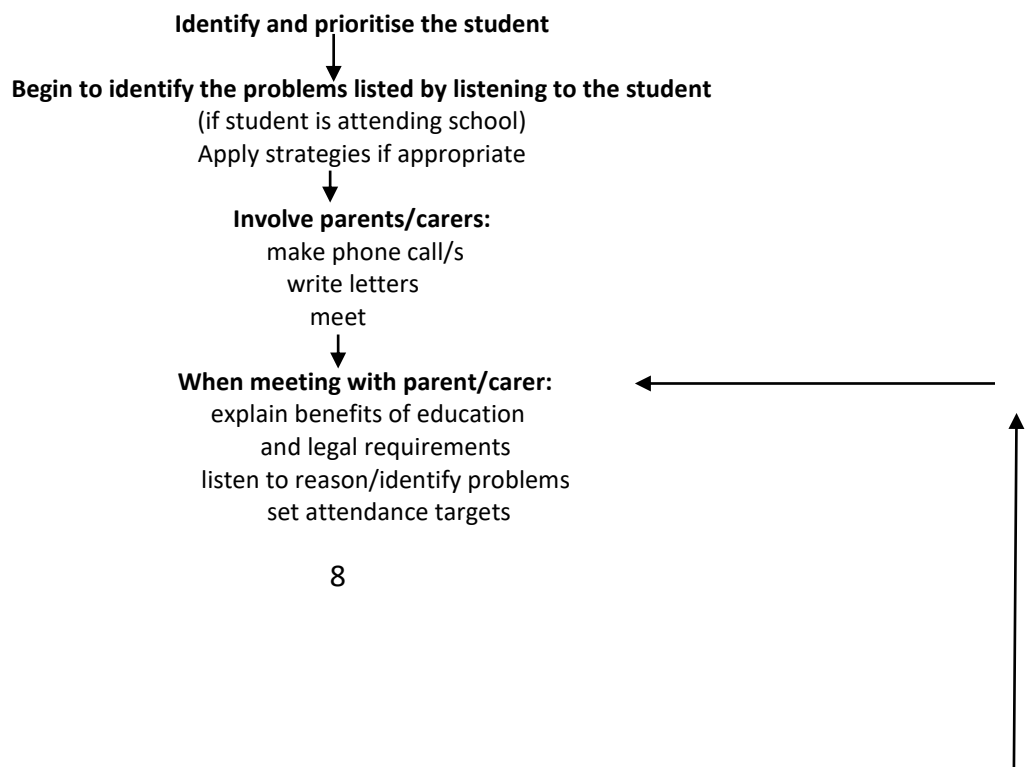
12. IN SCHOOL ACTION

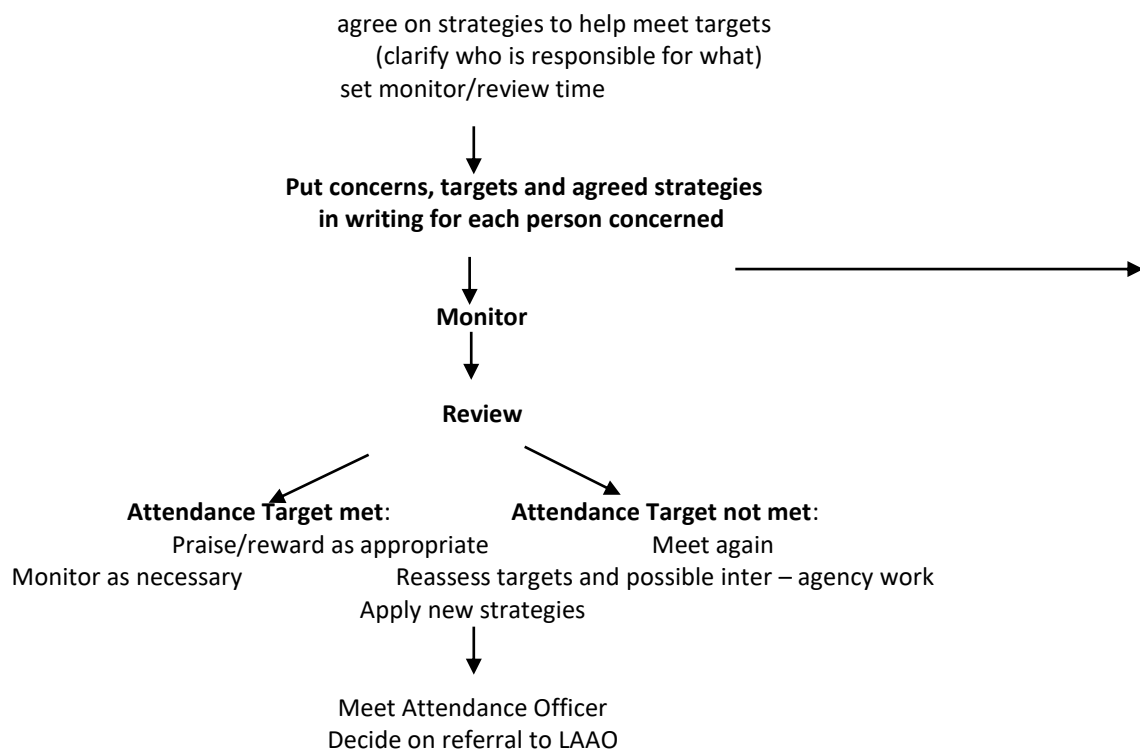
How can it be used?

1. The flow chart below suggests a process of in-school action that may lead to an improvement in attendance.
2. We recommend that intervention begins with the tutor/attendance officer, and progresses to involve Senior Staff (such as Deputy Headteacher) if appropriate.
3. All relevant letters to and from parents/carers etc. should be stored in the Year file for easy reference.
4. Improved attendance across the board, as concerns spotted tend to be addressed more quickly.
5. Prevention of some entrenched non-attendance, as it should prevent the 'drift' that tends to happen if no process is followed. Any deterioration should here be met by further action.
6. All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and will be aware who has already done what. (Information kept together and accessible, rather than attendance officer not knowing what, if anything, the form tutor has done).
7. Consultation visits should be more focused and productive, since it will be clear what has already been done, and time can be spent deciding on further action and over more 'difficult' cases.
8. When the LAAO accepts a student as a referral, the information provided on the sheet and attachments will assist the LAAO in making accurate assessment, ensure that the family sees that school and LAAO are in good communication and prevent duplication of work. The information will also enable more efficient court action, if appropriate.

**Batchwood School:
Action: Process**

Please tick or note this flowchart to indicate action taken





This sheet is for use with each child whose attendance is causing concern. The flow chart suggests a process of school action which may lead to an improvement in attendance. Intervention is likely to start with class/form tutor and progress as appropriate. Please tick, date or make a brief comment against the actions taken. The list of suggested strategies on the reverse of the sheet provides an aide memoire, and a record of school interventions. This sheet can be used during consultation visits with the Local Authority Attendance Officer to assist in the discussion of progress and future action. When making a referral to the LAAO it would be helpful if this could be provided, along with copies of all relevant paperwork (letters, meetings, records, IEP's etc).

Batchwood School Strategies

Strategy	Comments on strategy	Dates (from/to)
Provision		
Targeted first day response		
Assistance to catch up with work		
Link person/mentor		
Modification of curriculum/timetable		
Positive reporting		
Safe haven in school		
Staged reintegration		
Change of tutor group		
Buddy (peer)		
Assign special responsibility/task suited to student		
'Time Out' card		
Counselling		
Refer to other agencies		

Extra-curricular activities		
IEP		
Additional careers advice		
Work experience		
Pastoral Support Programme		
Use of peer counsellor		
Incentives		
Attendance charts		
On attendance report		
Customised reward/privilege		
Letter from Headteacher		
Involving Parents/carers		
Highlight benefits of good attendance		
Remind of legal responsibility re attendance		
Remind of school attendance policy		
Ask parent/carer to phone school by (eg.) 9am on day of absence		
Ask parent/carer to bring student to designated person in school each day		
Explain to parent/carer that absence will not be authorised		
Letter from AIO to parent/carer (not referral : emphasise concerns, support school action etc)		
Request GP certificate/letter from parent		
Write to GP		
Liaise with link support		

External Links:

Department of Education Guidance:

Appendix 1

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence

H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

GDPR

GDPR stipulates that Attendance data is personal/ sensitive data. Our school provides Data Subjects (individuals to whom "personal data" relate) with a right to data held about themselves, including those obtained by means of this report. Requests for Data Subject Access should be made to our data protection officer Katie Harris (gdprkharris@gmail.com)or the Head Teacher Mr Kemp (head@batchwood.herts.sch.uk)