Bromstone Primary School

Attendance Policy

Senior Team Responsibility: Head of School

Governors' Reviewing Committee: Full Governing Board

Approved: 7th October 2026

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027
Associated Documentation: The Key Model Attendance Policy

1) Aims

Bromstone Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is crucial if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. We are committed to building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils, and we use weekly and termly awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. Our school expectation is for every child to attend every day the school is open.

The Governors, Heads of School and Staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at Bromstone.

2) Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19th August) 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 (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

Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Executive Headteacher / Heads of School are 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 pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan has 'low, or 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 parents through all available channels

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Emma Ribbans, Head of School and can be contacted via office@bromstone.kent.sch.uk.

The Family Liaison Officer is responsible for:

- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The Family Liaison Officer is Nichola Sturges and can be contacted via nsturges@bromstone.kent.sch.uk

The school Attendance Administrator 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 Kent County Council School Liaison Officers to tackle persistent absence and severe absence
- Advising the Heads of School when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Administrator is Tina Strong and can be contacted via office@bromstone.kent.sch.uk

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office from 8.45am.

School Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Administrator in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/Carers:

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. The School Day at Bromstone is from 8.45am - 3.15pm. Gates open at 8.35am and the register is taken promptly at 8.45am. Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.45am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return - this is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that the child is safe and their whereabouts is known.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any agreements made as a result of an attendance meeting with the school and/or local authority

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child, and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning.

"Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education" **(Section 7 of the Education Act 1996)**

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4) Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 – see Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling/emailing, or sending an Arbor In app message to the school. We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. 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.

Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are attendance concerns, the school may ask for 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.

Planned absence

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 is able to provide proof of the appointment. We do however encourage parents 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 and attend school before / after their appointment.

The pupil's parent must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 entitled **'Authorised and Unauthorised Absence'** to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Following up unexplained absence

If any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence and each day that the absence continues without explanation to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit for safeguarding purposes
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's Early Help or Social Worker
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from external agencies, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve period with the possible consequence of parents receiving a penalty notice fine or referral to Kent County Council for a statutory involvement

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code – L
- After the register has closed at 9:15am the pupil will be marked as absent for the session, using the appropriate code – U (an unauthorised absence).
- Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U code) will be discussed with parents with the intention of establishing and removing any barriers to punctuality. Persistent lateness after support is not proactively engaged with could provide grounds for the application of a penalty notice.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels - all parents have access to their child's registration certificate and attendance percentage via the Arbor app and at the end of terms 2 and 4 the school will send out an attendance report for all children. Attendance percentages are also discussed at parents' consultations, where appropriate.

	96% or higher- 7.5 days absence or less across the year Met or exceeded school target
	90.1- 95.9% - 18 - 8 days absence across the year Below school target
	90% and under -19 or more days absence across the year Significantly below school target, classified as Persistently Absent by the Department for Education
	50% and under – 95 or more days absence across the year. Children are missing at least half of their time in school and are classed as Severely Absent by the Department for Education

5) Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Heads of School will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.
The Heads of School will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Heads of School's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. and by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Heads of School can agree the absence of a

child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, no leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

***"Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance"* (Working Together to Improve School Attendance – statutory guidance, August 2024)**

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.
Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks via the leave of absence request form on our school website accessible via: Absence Request Form The Heads of School may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments. Parents should consult the NHS guidance "Is my child to ill for school?" when deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Sanctions

Where necessary, our school will make use of Penalty Notice Fines and Referrals to the Kent County Council Attendance Service Courts Team who consider cases for prosecution to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty Notice Fines
The Heads of School can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice fine.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

- Whether further support or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

- If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.
- If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, the case may be referred to the Kent County Council Attendance Service Courts Team who will consider the case for prosecution via Magistrates' Court.

National Threshold for issuing a Penalty Notice Fines - 10 sessions/5 days of unauthorised absence in 10 school weeks meets the threshold to issue a Penalty Notice

Term Time Leave -10 sessions/5 days of unauthorised term time leave in 10 school weeks meets the threshold to issue a Penalty Notice.

Notice to Improve

- If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.
- Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

6) Strategies for promoting attendance

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils, and we use a variety of weekly and termly awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. These take the form of celebration assemblies for best class weekly attendance and badges given to children who achieve 100% attendance in a given term.

7) Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance (this could include, but is not limited to, mental or physical ill health or SEND)

'Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as it for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided' " **(Working Together to Improve School Attendance – statutory guidance - August 2024)**

An individualised approach is taken in supporting all pupils who have complex barriers to attending. This is underpinned by working in partnership with our pupils and their families and gaining a thorough understanding of the barriers. This relationship informs appropriate support that could take many forms including:

- Working with the local authority where appropriate
- Referrals to wider support services such as School Nursing, Early Help or Mental Health Support Teams
- Specialist counselling
- Breakfast/After School Club provision
- In school reasonable adjustments regarding access to support in school, routines and lunchtime arrangements
- "Soft landings" in to school
- Access to 'The Keep'
- In school enrichment interventions such 'forest school', 'dog walking', 'meditation sessions' etc
- Reviewing and updating the support provided to ensure it meets individual needs

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence will be supported in their transition back to school with a time limited phased return utilised where necessary. Appropriate support measures will be put in place on a case by case basis.

If a child has an EHCP school staff will communicate with the local authority where a pupils' attendance falls or barriers to attendance are established and ensure the provision outlined in a pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed

8) Attendance monitoring

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality), termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence – see Appendix 2

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Undertake frequent individual level analysis to target and evaluate intervention
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Write to and hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
- Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5)

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)

Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil’s travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		

G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Staged Approach for those at risk of persistent or severe absence **Appendix 2**

