Attendance & Absence Policy

Key Document Details

School Name: Braunton Academy

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Section 1

1.1 Introduction

At Braunton Academy we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Our Academy fulfils its responsibilities as laid out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Links to these documents can be found at the end of this policy.

Braunton Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. Only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents & carers, teaching & support staff and school governors, have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and all have important roles to play.

Braunton Academy recognises the important role that school attendance plays in safeguarding pupils, realising that unexplained absences can put a child at risk, as can significant absences over a longer period of time.

1.2 The Legal Framework

This policy meets the requirements of the new update working together to improve school attendance 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 policy is set out within the framework of the Education Act 1996, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, including amendments and other non-statutory guidance. As a parent you have a duty to ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time. Parents are liable to a Penalty Notice Fine or prosecution under Section 444 (1(A)).

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

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.

1.3 School's roles and responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.

A member of the Leadership Team known as the School Attendance Champion, will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available and relevant issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. Parents will regularly be reminded about the legal requirement for, and the importance of good school attendance.

By law schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance, or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended. The decision about whether any absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the school and not with parents.

Braunton Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be damaging to a young person's education.

The Attendance Champion will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task correctly. The school will ensure the attendance register is marked accurately. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers, and the Attendance Officer or administrator will ensure the correct codes are in place.

1.4 Expectations of Trustees

All Braunton Academy trustees will.

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

1.5 Daily Absence Procedure

At Braunton Academy, parents are expected to inform the school through absence reporting in ParentMail at the earliest opportunity of their child's absence. If parents have not contacted the school, the school will contact parents and will continue to do so until contact is made. If school is unable to contact the parent, they will try all other contacts they hold on to record, in order of priority until contact is established.

If an illness is prolonged, parents are asked to keep the school informed of progress and provide medical evidence. Parents are also requested to contact the school in advance to request any arranged absences, such as a hospital appointment or dentist. However, we request that as many routine appointments as possible are arranged out of school hours.

After the morning registers are complete, school will run a report to show all missing pupils/pupils for whom no explanation of absence has been received from parent/carer.

If a parent or carer has concerns about their child's attendance, then they should get in touch with the school to seek additional support.

Attendance Officer	attendance@braunton.academy
Year 7	Year7pastoral@braunton.academy
Year 8	Year8pastoral@braunton.academy
Year 9	Year9pastoral@braunton.academy
Year 10	Year10pastoral@braunton.academy
Year 11	Year11pastoral@braunton.academy

1st day of absence	Pupil recorded as absent from Registers Attendance staff send absence notification to parents/carers (telephone call or automated notification) If no response from parent, Pastoral Team/DSL/Attendance Officer/Headteacher, to make decisions that may result in either direct telephone/email contact from school, or home visit (depending on level of risk).
2nd day of absence	Pupil recorded as absent from Register. Attendance staff send Absence notification to parents/carers. Any pupil who is deemed vulnerable will automatically be visited by school staff

	on day 2 without parental contact, unless specifically advised not to do so by DSL.
3rd day of absence	Pupil recorded as absent from Register Attendance Team send Absence notification to parents/carers Pastoral Team/DSL/Headteacher alerted to those pupils who have had a 3rd day of absence with no notification. Phone call home is completed for all pupils on 3rd day of absence.
5th day of absence	Pupil recorded as absent from Register Attendance Team send absence notification to parents/carers Pastoral Team/DSL/Headteacher alerted to those pupils who have had a 5th day of absence. Home visit is completed for all pupils on 5th day of absence. Home visit form is completed & CPOMS log submitted on return. Discussion held with DSL/Headteacher to agree further action. (This may include repeated home visits, request for welfare checks from Police, DSL/Headteacher contacting Police/MASH etc).
10th day of absence	CME form completed Emailed securely to the Local Authority. Children missing education - Support for schools and settings

Welfare checks are undertaken on pupils who have had 5 continuous days of absence (excluding those with hospital admissions), including those where the school has been informed of the absence by parent/carer. This is to ensure all children are regularly sighted. Any home visits must be undertaken by two staff members and must be logged on an appropriate system.

1.6 Punctuality

Any pupil who arrives late and before 9.15am will need to sign in with the attendance officer. Those who arrive late before the register has closed will be coded as L (Late before the register has closed). Any pupils who arrive late and after the closing of the register at 9.15am will need to sign in with the attendance officer. Those who arrive after the register has closed will be recorded on the register as code U (late after registers have closed) which will give them an unauthorised session absence. Any pupil who is consistently late for school will be picked up by the Attendance Officer or Pastoral Lead. Continuous lateness will contribute to regular unauthorised attendance and therefore could result in a penalty notice being issued.

1.7 Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Trustees and Principal do not support parents taking their children out of school for holidays.

Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school, and the Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances include service personnel who are prevented from taking leave of absence outside term time at any point in the school year, or the terminal illness or bereavement of a parent or sibling if the absence is concurrent. A letter from an employer may be required to support restricted work annual leave.

If parents do wish to request leave of absence or Holidays in Term Time for such exceptional circumstances, they should use the Braunton Academy leave of absence form (which is accessible on the school website).

Requests for leave of absence will be looked at on a case-by-case basis and it is up to the discretion of the Principal to make a decision about whether a request may be considered an exceptional circumstance or not. The Principal will inform the parent in writing as to the decision made regarding the request.

If parents decide to take their children on holiday where the absence is unauthorised, the school will follow the Local Authority's Guidance for Schools on leave of absence during term time, and inform the Education Welfare Service who may, on behalf of the Local Authority, issue a fixed penalty notice. Information about fixed penalty notices is available below.

The Principal is advised to treat each application individually, and will consider the following factors when making a decision;

- The child's overall attendance record
- Whether the absence falls during a year when public examinations are due or government tests.
- The effect on the child's continuity of learning
- The family circumstances

When an absence is approved then it is an authorised absence. Should parents/carers keep their child away in excess of the agreed period, then the extra time will be treated as an unauthorised absence. An absence request for a holiday can only be made by the parent/carer with whom the child lives.

1.8 Leaving School before the end of the day

It is not expected that children should need to leave early. However, in some exceptional circumstances, children may have to be collected early from school.

Parents/carers who wish to collect their children early must inform the school by telephone or in writing, stating clearly the reason why the child is leaving school.

Requests may only be made by the parent/carer with day-to-day care. This safeguards against an estranged parent/carer making a request without the

knowledge of the parent who has care and control. If there are other arrangements in place for the child to leave the school premises, such as another adult will collect the child, the school must be informed in writing.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to keep the school fully aware of contact details of named and responsible adults.

1.9 Attendance Monitoring

Whole school attendance is monitored on a weekly basis and clear procedures are followed should there be any concerns. The School Attendance Champion and Attendance Team will monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. Braunton Academy uses a staged approach to effectively manage pupil absence where attendance falls below 96% (where no medical/other evidence to support authorising absence has been provided):

Attendance Stage 1

- A Stage 1 letter is sent home raising concerns that attendance has fallen below DfE expectations and is being monitored.
- A stage 1 letter should be considered when there have either been 10 unauthorised or 20 total sessions of absence.
- If there is little or no improvement at next week's monitoring, progress to Stage 2.

Attendance Stage 2

- A Stage 2 letter is sent home raising further concerns that attendance is significantly below DfE expectations and is continuing to be monitored.
- A stage 2 letter should be considered when there have either been 15 unauthorised or 30 total sessions of absence.
- If there is little or no improvement at next week's monitoring, progress to Stage 3.
- If the next week there is little or no improvement in attendance school will arrange a School Attendance Contract with parents to agree an action plan. Parents will be sent a written record of this meeting within 5 working days.
- If the parent does not attend the meeting, an opportunity will be given for a new date. On the second date the meeting will be held with or without the parent present.
- Attendance will be reviewed by school in 3 weeks. During this period no absence will be authorised without supporting medical evidence. Following the meeting it is normal practice to expect 100% attendance.
- If there is little or no improvement at the review, parents will be invited into school for a Review meeting where a revised plan is agreed. At this stage parents can be sent Notice to Improve Letter warning against future unauthorised absences within a set timeframe. See below for more information.

Attendance Stage 3

- A Stage 3 letter is sent home raising further concerns that attendance is significantly below DfE expectations and is continuing to be monitored.
- A stage 3 letter should be considered when there have either been 20 unauthorised or 40 total sessions of absence.

- Referral to Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)
- Referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) can be made earlier if a pupil has been at Stage 3 in a previous academic year.
- If following the Review of the School Attendance Contract there is still no improvement in attendance, school may refer to the AIO who will then arrange to meet with parents/carers.
- AIO or School Attendance Champion will consider instigating legal proceedings by consulting/referring to the relevant Local Authority.

1.10 Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by all schools where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences.

All schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency.

The threshold is.

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks).

These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).

The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

If a pupil takes unauthorised term time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a penalty notice. The fine for a penalty notice is £80 per parent, per child. This increases to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.

For second offences of unauthorised term time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per child.

For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, there will be no option to pay a penalty notice, however if it meets threshold alternative action may be taken in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.

These fines will apply to term time leave taken after 19th August 2024.

The three-year rolling period begins from the date the first PN fine is issued to the parent after 19th of August 2024.

1.11 Removal From School Roll

A pupil will be removed from the school roll in accordance with the regulations in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations of 2006. These regulations include when:

- Parents make a written request to the school to home school their child. (EHE Braunton Academy process must be followed)
- Parents make a written request for a change of school, and the receiving school confirms that they have started.
- They have been on a direction offsite (DOS) and the school they are attending has agreed to take them on roll.
- They have left at the end of Year 11.
- They have been continually absent from school for a period of not less than 4 weeks and both the school and the Local Education Authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil.

This follows the Child Missing Education procedures.

- The pupil no longer lives a reasonable distance from the school.
- The pupil is detained under a sentence of detention.
- The pupil has been permanently excluded from the school and any outcome or appeal or reinstatement has been finalised.

1.12 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Mark the registers in accordance with the law twice a day
- Inform any parents/carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.
- Maintain records and monitor attendance of pupils on a regular basis.
- Authorise absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that only the Headteacher can authorise absence.
- Contact parents/carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and/or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.
- Provide reintegration support for pupils returning from long-term absence.

- Create a triangulated supportive approach for improving attendance on an individual basis.
- Focus on persistently absent and severely absent cohorts and strategies to reduce barriers for children who fall within this category.
- Be aware of key target and focus groups' attendance in order to understand patterns of absence methods for reducing the barriers facing these cohorts.
- Maintain a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.
- Work with relevant external agencies if a pupils' attendance becomes a concern, i.e. Local Authority AIO team, Social Care, CAMHS, Education Welfare Service and The Police.

1.13 Support Systems

Braunton Academy recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. School will work with pupils and parent/carers to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Braunton Academy also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children. School will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include.

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- School Attendance Contracts
- Counselling
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Pupil Voice activities
- Personal Development
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time timetables (only to be agreed by School Attendance Champion or/and Headteacher
- Additional learning support
- Reintegration support packages
- EBSA graduated support

Particular focus will be given to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partner agencies.

Where absence means pupils have missed 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), the school will work together with pupil and parents/carers to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and pupils. Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, School will consider the use of legal sanction.

1.14 Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents (minimum fortnightly). In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised. If the part – time timetable goes beyond six weeks, it should be re-agreed and new paperwork signed. It is expected good practice to review the success and therefore the arrangements/logistics of the timetable every two weeks to aim to increase access to education on site.

1.15 How Data Is used

Pupil-level absence data is collected each week 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 national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with Governors and Trustees. Additionally.

1.16 Children Missing in Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff in education provision should follow the provision's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential, pupils need to attend regularly. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Braunton Academy will ensure schools maintain admissions and attendance registers. All pupils will be placed on both registers. The schools will use the national absence and attendance codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulations.

Braunton Academy will promote good school attendance and put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing in education.

Braunton Academy will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or who has been absent, without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Braunton Academy will follow agreed safeguarding and child protection procedures where it is suspected that children missing from education are suffering from abuse or neglect. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police will be involved.

1.17 Relevant Policies

- 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
- It also refers to:
- working together to improve school attendance
- school attendance parental responsibility measures.
- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

Section 2 – Appendix

2.1 Braunton Academy Key Information

School Attendance Officer	Mrs Odette Fouche attendance@braunton.academy
School Attendance Senior Leadership Link	Mr Jamie Frickleton jfrickleton@braunton.academy
Braunton Academy Contact Number	01271 812221
School Email Address	admin@braunton.academy
Time registers open in the morning	8.45am
Time registers close in the morning	9.05am

2.2 Daily Absence Procedure

To report an absence, parents must use the absence feature within ParentMail. Parents must give a reason.

If a parent or carer has concerns about their child's attendance, then they should get in touch with the school to seek additional support.

At Braunton Academy the parent should contact the following staff regarding their child's attendance:

Attendance Officer	attendance@braunton.academy
Year 7	Year7pastoral@braunton.academy
Year 8	Year8pastoral@braunton.academy
Year 9	Year9pastoral@braunton.academy
Year 10	Year10pastoral@braunton.academy
Year 11	Year11pastoral@braunton.academy

2.3 Senior Leadership Team - Inclusion

Assistant Vice Principal	Mr J Frickleton	jfrickleton@braunton.academy
Vice Principal	Mrs E Woodhead	ewoodhead@braunton.academy
Principal	Mrs F Bowler	fbowler@braunton.academy