Attendance Policy

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Role	**Deputy Headteacher**
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1. Purpose and principles

Brackenfield SEND School is committed to every pupil's right to an efficient, full-time education that is suitable to their age, aptitude and special educational needs. Attendance is a safeguarding, welfare, inclusion and learning priority. Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility and is not the work of one person or team.

- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for every pupil.
- Build respectful, trusting relationships with pupils and families and listen carefully to barriers.
- Use accurate, timely attendance information to identify patterns early.
- Remove in-school barriers, make reasonable adjustments and facilitate wider support.
- Apply a graduated response: expect, monitor, listen and understand, facilitate support, formalise support, and enforce only where appropriate and necessary.
- Apply this policy fairly and consistently while responding to individual circumstances.

SEND context The attendance ambition is the same for pupils with SEND and health needs as for all pupils. The route to achieving it may require personalised support, reasonable adjustments, health input, transport liaison, reintegration planning or multi-agency work.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy has been updated with regard to Working together to improve school attendance: statutory guidance (Department for Education, July 2026) and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. It also has regard to:

- Education Act 1996, including sections 7, 19 and 444
- Education Act 2002
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children Act 1989
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- Sentencing Act 2020
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Children missing education statutory guidance
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Derbyshire local code of conduct for penalty notices and local attendance procedures
- DfE guidance: Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Ofsted State-funded Schools Inspection Toolkit 2026

The school will update practice promptly when national or local requirements change. Where this policy and a later statutory requirement differ, the current statutory requirement and local code will apply.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Governing Board

- Promote attendance across the school's ethos and policies and hold leaders to account.
- Ensure legal duties, accurate registration and required data sharing are fulfilled.
- Review attendance data, trends, cohorts and the impact of improvement activity regularly.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate attendance training and that attendance work is adequately resourced.
- Support and challenge leaders to adapt processes to pupils' individual needs, including SEND, health needs, social care involvement, young carers and disadvantaged pupils.
- Approve this policy and review it at least annually.

3.2 Executive Headteacher and Heads of Site

- Ensure this policy is implemented consistently across both sites.
- Monitor school-level attendance and report to governors.
- Authorise leave of absence decisions and ensure no blanket approach is used.
- Ensure support, safeguarding, SEND and Equality Act duties are considered before legal intervention.
- Liaise with the local authority where required, including for pupils with EHC plans and pupils missing education.
- Authorise any school-issued penalty notice and check with the local authority before issue.

3.3 Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion is Milly Murray, Deputy Headteacher, contactable through the school telephone number.

- Set the vision and lead improvement across the school.
- Maintain oversight of attendance data, systems, casework and staff practice.
- Ensure prompt, graduated and joined-up support for pupils and families.
- Lead formal conversations and partnership work where absence persists.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of strategies, interventions, reasonable adjustments and reintegration plans.
- Ensure the Governing Board receives clear, contextualised attendance information.

3.4 Attendance Manager

The Attendance Manager is Mollie Swann, contactable through the school telephone number or attendance@brackenfield.derbyshire.sch.uk.

- Receive absence information and establish reasons and expected return dates.
- Maintain accurate attendance records in Arbor and ensure temporary N codes are resolved within five working days.
- Complete first-day contact, safeguarding follow-up and home or video welfare checks in line with risk.
- Analyse attendance weekly and coordinate attendance support plans, meetings and reviews.
- Work with families, class teams, the Family Support Worker, external agencies and the local authority.
- Maintain a complete chronology of contact, support, decisions and impact.

3.5 Class teams, office staff, parents and pupils

For the purposes of this policy, 'parent' includes all natural parents, whether married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for the pupil; and any person who has day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's care.

Role	Core responsibilities
Class teachers and class teams	Take both registers accurately and on time; use the school's present/no-reason workflow; identify barriers; maintain supportive communication; implement agreed adjustments and plans; transfer attendance information to Arbor/MyConcern as required.
Office staff	Pass absence information promptly to the Attendance Manager; support contact with families; protect confidentiality; direct complex enquiries to the appropriate lead.
Parents/carers	Ensure regular and punctual attendance; report absence before 9:00 on every day of absence; provide the reason and expected return; provide more than one current emergency contact wherever possible and notify the school promptly of changes; request planned absence in advance; attend meetings and work with agreed support. Where a pupil is in the EYFS, parents should provide more than two emergency contacts where possible.
Pupils	Attend every timetabled session on time; contribute their views to plans and reviews in a way suited to their communication needs.

4. Attendance expectations and the school day

Regular attendance means attending every session, for the full duration of the session, unless there is a statutory reason for absence. The school will communicate the published start and finish times for each site and cohort to families.

Standard registration point To meet the July 2026 requirement for the register to be taken at the same time for all registered pupils, the morning register will be taken at 9:15 and close at 9:45. The afternoon register will be taken at 12:10 and close at 12:40. These windows are no longer than 30 minutes. Any change to session times must be approved and reflected in this policy before implementation.

Pupils who are not physically present when the register is taken but enter school before it closes will be recorded using Code L, as required by the national attendance codes. Code L is classified statistically as attending. Pupils arriving after the register closes will be recorded using Code U unless another authorised or unavoidable-cause code more accurately describes the circumstances.

4.1 SEND transport and managed arrival

A significant proportion of Brackenfield pupils travel to school using Local Authority commissioned SEND transport. Due to the number of vehicles arriving and the need for pupils to disembark, transition and enter school safely, the managed arrival process can take up to approximately 30 minutes.

The school will maintain the statutory attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and DfE attendance guidance. Where a pupil is not physically present in school when the register is taken but enters before the register closes, the appropriate statutory code, including Code L where required, will be used.

Where a pupil has arrived at the school site, or joined the school's managed SEND transport arrival queue, within the expected arrival period, but entry to the building is delayed solely because of vehicle queuing, safe disembarkation, staffing arrangements or the school's managed transition process, this will not be treated by Brackenfield as pupil or parent lateness.

Any Code L recorded in these circumstances will be identified separately within the school's internal monitoring arrangements as transport/system-related delay. It will not, in isolation, trigger a punctuality intervention, attendance escalation, formal action or movement within the Universal, Targeted and Specialist attendance framework.

The Attendance Manager will monitor transport-related delay separately from pupil or family-related lateness. Where a Local Authority commissioned vehicle itself arrives later than the expected arrival period, the reason will be established and the statutory register code selected according to the individual circumstances. Repeated transport concerns will be raised with the relevant transport provider or Local Authority rather than being automatically attributed to the pupil or family.

The school will periodically review its published session start time, registration arrangements and managed arrival process to ensure they remain lawful, practical and appropriate for the volume and needs of pupils using SEND transport.

5. Registration and attendance codes

- The school will keep electronic admission and attendance registers.
- The attendance register will be taken at the beginning of each morning session and once during the afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils.
- An appropriate national code will be entered for every pupil. Pupils receiving remote education while absent remain recorded as absent using the appropriate code.
- Every entry will be retained for six years from the date it was made.
- Amendments will preserve the original entry, amended entry, reason, date and the name and position of the person making the amendment.
- Code N is temporary. The correct code will be entered as soon as the reason is established and no later than five working days after the session; otherwise N will be changed to O.
- Pupils attending off-site provision will only be recorded as attending an approved educational activity where the statutory conditions are met and the provider confirms attendance for each session.
- Where a pupil attends alternative provision, the school will verify attendance with the provider for each relevant session. The suitability, safety, attendance and effectiveness of the placement will be formally reviewed at least half-termly.

A summary of national codes is in Appendix A. Staff must consult the current regulations and DfE guidance where a code is unclear.

6. Reporting absence and first-day response

6.1 Parent reporting

Parents must telephone the school before 9:00 on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day unless a different contact arrangement is agreed. They should give a clear reason and expected return date. Planned medical or dental absence should be notified in advance to attendance@brackenfield.derbyshire.sch.uk and the pupil should miss the minimum time necessary.

6.2 School response

- Check the pupil is not on site, on transport, at another approved provision or subject to an agreed arrangement.
- Contact the parent on the first morning when no reason has been received.

- Use additional emergency contacts, and where appropriate contact transport, foster carers, social workers or youth offending team workers.
- Continue contact each day when absence remains unexplained and take safeguarding action in line with risk.
- Record the reason and correct code promptly.
- Offer support and identify whether wider services or referrals are required.
- Complete a home visit or secure video welfare check by day 5 of absence, or sooner where vulnerability, safeguarding information, unexplained absence or professional judgement indicates.
- If the pupil cannot be seen safe and well, follow safeguarding and children missing education procedures and consider referral to children's social care or police as appropriate.

All actions, attempted contacts, decisions and outcomes must be recorded on the relevant school system and, where safeguarding-related, on the pupil chronology.

7. Leave of absence and authorised absence

Leave of absence must be requested in advance by the parent the pupil normally lives with. The Headteacher will consider each application on its individual facts, circumstances and context. The school will not operate blanket rules that automatically grant leave.

Leave may be granted only for the specific circumstances permitted by the 2024 Regulations, including regulated performance or employment abroad, an interview, public-examination study leave, a temporary time-limited part-time timetable, or exceptional circumstances. Holidays and leisure or recreation are not normally exceptional circumstances. Leave cannot be granted retrospectively.

Medical and dental appointments should be outside school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, agreement should be sought in advance and absence limited to the appointment and necessary travel time. Illness absence, including mental-health-related illness, will normally be authorised on parent notification. The school will not routinely require medical evidence or use blanket evidence rules. Reasonable evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt, or to understand prolonged or repeated illness and identify appropriate support.

8. Promoting attendance and recognising improvement

- Create a calm, safe, supportive and communication-accessible environment where pupils belong and are ready to learn.
- Communicate high expectations clearly and consistently throughout transition and the school year.
- Teach and reinforce routines that support attendance and punctuality.
- Use pupil voice, family partnership and the key-worker model to identify and remove barriers.
- Recognise individual improvement, engagement and achievement sensitively, without discriminating against pupils whose disability or medical needs affect attendance.
- Regularly inform families about time missed, emerging patterns and the effect on learning, rather than relying only on headline percentages.

Recognition will not disadvantage pupils because of disability, medical treatment or other protected circumstances. Attendance rewards will be reviewed for equality impact and will prioritise improvement and engagement rather than relying solely on perfect attendance.

9. Graduated attendance response

Percentage thresholds are indicators, not automatic sanctions. The school will also act on emerging patterns, repeated lateness, unauthorised absence, changes from a pupil's usual attendance, missed transport, safeguarding information and pupil or family concerns. Pupils may move directly to Specialist support where safeguarding risk, statutory duties, complexity or professional advice require this; they do not need to progress sequentially through every level.

Level	Entry indicators	School response	Move/step-down indicators
Universal	All pupils; attendance generally 90–100%; isolated authorised absence; no emerging concerning pattern.	Daily monitoring and follow-up; positive relationships; routine family communication; prompt barrier identification; attendance and safeguarding information triangulated.	Continue while sufficient. Move to Targeted when a persistent or emerging barrier requires planned additional support.
Targeted	Attendance below 90%; or below 95% with frequent unauthorised absence; or a concerning pattern regardless of percentage; repeated lateness or difficulty attending; universal support insufficient.	Attendance Manager and class team co-produce an Attendance Support Plan; identify barriers, actions, responsible people and review date; consider anxiety, transport, health, communication and family support; review at least every four weeks; weekly data review by Attendance Manager and Deputy Headteacher.	Step down when attendance and engagement improve and barriers are effectively managed, normally sustained for at least six weeks, with a recorded review and contingency. Move to Specialist where risk, complexity or lack of progress requires it.
Specialist	Attendance remains below 90% or declines despite a targeted plan; attendance below 80%; complex or persistent health, safeguarding, SEND or family barriers; LA or multi-agency support required; individual reintegration arrangement needed.	Named SLT link; intensive case management; multi-agency plan and reviews at intervals no longer than four weeks; LA/SEND/health/social care/EWO involvement as appropriate; individual reintegration and reasonable adjustments; consider statutory processes only after support and equality duties.	Step down from Specialist following professional and family review when attendance is improving, risk and complexity have reduced and a Targeted plan can safely sustain progress. Improvement should normally be evidenced over a period of at least six weeks. Where absence remains planned or unavoidable because of health, SEND or other complex needs, step-down may be appropriate where the absence is effectively managed through an agreed attendance plan and the level of specialist involvement is no longer required. Responsibilities, contingency arrangements and the next review date will be

Level	Entry indicators	School response	Move/step-down indicators
			recorded.

Persistent absence is 10% or more missed sessions. Severe absence is 50% or more missed sessions. Pupils approaching these levels will receive early action rather than waiting for a threshold to be crossed.

10. Pupils absent because of health, SEND or complex barriers

- Understand the pupil's individual needs and family context, including communication, sensory, physical, emotional, medical and transport barriers.
- Work with the pupil and family to put in-school support and reasonable adjustments in place and review them regularly.
- Ensure provision in the EHC plan remains accessible and inform the local authority if attendance falls or barriers relate to the pupil's needs. Where needed, seek review or amendment of the EHC plan.
- Liaise with school nursing, mental health support, CAMHS, GPs, therapists, social care, transport and other agencies where appropriate.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority where a compulsory-school-age pupil recorded with code I is reasonably expected to miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively in the current school year.
- Consider a time-limited phased return where appropriate, with a clear full-time ambition and regular review.
- Do not diagnose or treat health conditions, but work collaboratively to secure education and support.
- Where anxiety, emotional regulation, sensory needs or other barriers affect attendance, the school will work with the pupil, family and relevant professionals to understand the underlying cause, make appropriate reasonable adjustments and support attendance, while maintaining an ambition for the pupil to access their full educational entitlement.
- Where a parent expresses an intention to educate a pupil at home, the school will offer a meeting with the parent and relevant professionals before a final decision is made, so that the pupil's needs, best interests, voice, safeguarding and, where applicable, EHC plan can be fully considered. The school will follow statutory procedures and liaise with the local authority.

Young carers, pupils with a social worker and other cohorts

The school will identify and monitor attendance barriers affecting young carers, pupils with a social worker, looked-after and previously looked-after pupils, pupils eligible for pupil premium, pupils with SEND or long-term illness, and any locally relevant cohort. Young carers will be recorded accurately in the census and supported in partnership with the family and local authority. Unexplained absence will be shared with a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker where applicable.

11. Reintegration, remote education and part-time timetables

11.1 Reintegration

Following lengthy or unavoidable absence, the school will agree a personalised reintegration plan with the pupil and family. It will identify barriers, reasonable adjustments, provision, a named lead, intended attendance pattern, review points, pupil voice, family actions, agency contributions and a contingency if attendance deteriorates.

11.2 Remote education

Remote education is a last resort. It will be considered only after reasonable adjustments and other approaches have been considered, and as part of a wider plan supporting return to school. A pupil receiving remote education while absent will remain marked absent using the appropriate national code. Engagement may be monitored separately but does not constitute attendance in the register.

11.3 Temporary part-time timetables

- Use only in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests, never to manage behaviour.
- Agree with the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Include a clear ambition, agreed attendance times, support arrangements, regular review dates and a proposed end date.
- Keep in place for the shortest necessary period and work towards full-time education.
- Involve the pupil and parent in reviews; inform the social worker where applicable.
- Discuss with the local authority promptly where the pupil has an EHC plan.
- Record non-attendance under the temporary timetable accurately, normally using C2 for a compulsory-school-age pupil.

12. Data monitoring, reporting and information sharing

- Monitor individual and whole-school attendance and punctuality weekly, with half-termly, termly and full-year analysis.
- Analyse all severities of absence, not only persistent and severe absence, including patterns by code, day, site, cohort and individual pupil, including separate analysis of transport/system-related delay and pupil or family-related lateness.
- Benchmark against local, regional, national and similar-school data where available.
- Provide regular reports to class teams, the Senior Attendance Champion, DSL, SEND and pupil premium leads, Heads of Site and the Governing Board.
- Evaluate the impact of school-wide and individual interventions and change approaches where they are not working.
- Meet and share information with the local authority School Attendance Support Team through Targeting Support Meetings.
- Share information lawfully, proportionately and securely with partners where this supports attendance, education, welfare or safeguarding.

The school will make required New Pupil and Deletion returns, attendance returns for compulsory-school-age pupils who fail to attend regularly or have ten continuous school days of unauthorised absence, and sickness returns as described above. State-funded pupil information will be shared with the Secretary of State as required.

13. Persistent and severe absence

Where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, the school and local authority will work together to provide additional targeted support. Where a pupil misses 50% or more, the case will be prioritised for intensive, coordinated support. The school will:

- Meet the pupil and family to listen to and understand barriers.
- Review safeguarding, SEND, health, transport, curriculum, behaviour, communication and family circumstances.
- Agree a single, clear plan with actions, success measures, responsible leads and review dates.
- Use a team-around-the-family or other multi-agency approach where needs extend beyond school.
- Agree a joint approach with the local authority for every severely absent pupil where needed.
- Where severe unauthorised absence continues despite appropriate education, reasonable adjustments and all appropriate avenues of support having been facilitated, consider whether the circumstances indicate neglect or another safeguarding concern. The school will act in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, including consideration of a Child in Need or Child Protection assessment where appropriate.

14. Formal support and legal intervention

Legal intervention applies only to pupils of compulsory school age. Decisions are individual, proportionate, safeguarding-aware and equality-informed. Support will be provided first wherever appropriate. Available routes include attendance contracts, education supervision orders, attendance prosecution, parenting orders and penalty notices.

14.1 Attendance contracts and education supervision orders

An attendance contract is a formal written, non-binding agreement used to secure engagement where voluntary support has not worked or is inappropriate. It will be co-produced with the parent, set out requirements, school/local authority support, duration and review arrangements. An education supervision order may be considered with the local authority where voluntary support or an attendance contract has not succeeded and the order would benefit the pupil.

14.2 Notices to Improve and penalty notices

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10 school weeks. Meeting the threshold does not create an automatic fine. The school and local authority will consider whether support is appropriate, whether it has been provided and engaged with, whether a penalty notice is the best tool, and Equality Act obligations.

Where support is appropriate but has not worked or been engaged with, a Notice to Improve will usually offer a final opportunity to improve over a period of 3 to 6 weeks, in line with the Derbyshire local code. It will specify the attendance concern, support, improvement required and potential consequences.

Penalty notice	Amount and timescale
First notice to the same parent for the same pupil	£160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days; £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second notice within three years	£160 if paid within 28 days.

Penalty notice	Amount and timescale
Third offence within three years	A third penalty notice cannot be issued; alternative action will be considered.

The issuing officer will check with the local authority before issue, comply with the local code of conduct and send the local authority a copy. Payment is made to the local authority. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

15. Children missing education and removal from roll

Absence can be a vital safeguarding warning. The school will make timely and reasonable enquiries jointly with the relevant local authority where a pupil's location or circumstances are unknown, follow children missing education procedures and maintain the pupil on roll until a lawful ground for deletion is fully met.

A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register for a reason permitted by regulation 9 of the 2024 Regulations. A pupil at a special school who was registered under local authority arrangements will not be removed without local authority consent, except where the regulations permit otherwise. Deletion and attendance records will not be backdated.

16. Equality, accessibility and safeguarding

The school will comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and duties to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Attendance information, meetings and plans will be accessible to pupils and families, including through adapted communication, translation, advocacy and reasonable adjustments where required.

Attendance and safeguarding data will be considered together. Staff will not assume that disability, health or SEND explains absence without listening to the pupil and family and reviewing risk. Equally, pupils will not be penalised for barriers the school or its partners are responsible for removing.

17. Training, review and publication

- All staff will receive attendance training through induction and continuing professional development, including the importance of attendance, register duties, school procedures, safeguarding and working with families.
- Staff with specific attendance responsibilities will receive additional training in coding, data analysis, casework, legal processes, SEND, reasonable adjustments and partnership working.
- The policy will be published on the school website, given to families when pupils join, and highlighted at the start of each school year and when updated.
- Pupil and parent views will inform future review.
- The Senior Attendance Champion will review this policy at least annually and sooner when statutory guidance, legislation, local procedures or school arrangements change.

Appendix A: National attendance code summary

Code	Meaning
/	Present, morning
\	Present, afternoon
L	Late before register closes
K	Education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Educational visit or trip
P	Approved sporting activity
W	Work experience
B	Other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
C1	Regulated performance or employment abroad
M	Medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview
S	Study leave for public examination
X	Non-compulsory-school-age pupil not required to attend
C2	Temporary part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness, physical or mental health
E	Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision
Q	Lack of access arrangements where the LA has a legal duty
Y1	Transport normally provided not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Part of premises closed
Y4	Whole site unexpectedly closed
Y5	Criminal justice detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law
Y7	Other unavoidable cause
G	Holiday not granted
N	Reason not yet established, temporary for up to five working days
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived after register closed
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole-school closure

The wording above is a concise operational summary. Staff must use the current regulations and DfE guidance to confirm that the full statutory conditions for a code are met.

Appendix B: Attendance support plan requirements

- Pupil details and accessible pupil voice
- Attendance pattern and analysis, including punctuality and absence codes
- Strengths, successful routines and protective factors
- Identified in-school and out-of-school barriers
- SEND, EHC plan, health, safeguarding, transport and equality considerations
- Reasonable adjustments and provision to be put in place
- Family, pupil, school and partner actions
- Named lead and contact arrangements
- Measurable intended outcomes and attendance ambition
- Start date, review date and frequency, normally no longer than four weeks at Targeted or Specialist level
- Contingency and escalation or step-down criteria
- Record of consent, information sharing and copies provided

Appendix C: Daily absence and safeguarding response

Stage	Action	Required response
1	Register taken	Class teacher records present or no reason at the agreed time.
2	Immediate checks	Attendance Manager checks site, transport, approved provision and known arrangements.
3	First-day contact	Contact parent and establish reason, expected return and welfare. Use emergency contacts and involved professionals as appropriate.
4	Record and code	Update Arbor and chronology. Use N only temporarily and replace within five working days.
5	Safeguarding escalation	If contact is not made or risk is identified, consider home visit, video welfare check, social worker contact, referral or police welfare check in line with safeguarding procedures.
6	Ongoing absence	Maintain agreed daily contact, provide appropriate educational support, and see the pupil safe and well by day 5 or sooner according to risk.
7	Support and return	Identify barriers, agree adjustments and initiate an attendance support or reintegration plan where required.