

# Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School Policy



## Student Attendance

Authorised by Resolution of the Governing Body of the Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School  
Date: 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023  
Signature .....  
Effective date of the policy 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023  
Review date of policy July 2026

### **This policy is written in the light of the school mission statement.**

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School aims to provide excellence in education. To achieve this aim our students need to attend school regularly. We recognise that good understanding and practices of attendance, punctuality and being prepared for work, are skills that everyone will need throughout their life.

As Christians we have a responsibility to develop and use our talents to the best of our ability.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school and arrive punctually. The school, working in partnership with them, aims to achieve an attendance record of above 95%.

### **Legislation and Guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [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:

- 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.

## **Aims**

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School is committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school

We are also committed to promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Governors are 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

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Working with external agencies to tackle persistent absence

The Form Tutor is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information into SIMS

School admin/support staff will:

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

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence between 8.00am and 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- 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

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on their timetable

### **Recording Attendance**

The School will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register. Teachers will take an attendance register at the start of the school day and in every subsequent timetabled lesson.

### **Unplanned absence**

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence between 8.00am and 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin. The School will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The School will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance. Appendix 1 outlines the School's scheduled response to absence.

### **Planned Absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. The School encourages parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents/carers must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Appendix 1 outlines the School's scheduled response to absence.

### **Lateness and Punctuality**

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent.

### **Reporting to Parents/Carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly reports on SIMS ParentApp.

### **Approval for Term-Time Absence**

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, in accordance with any leave of absence request form, see Appendix 2. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

### **Legal Sanctions**

The School or Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, Local Authority Officer or the Police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Student-level absence 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the School Governors.

### **Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence**

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school (see Appendix 1)
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

### **Links with other policies**

Teaching and Learning

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Behaviour and Discipline

Child Protection and Safeguarding

## Appendix 1

### Schedule of response to student non-attendance

1. Parents contacted on first day if student absent from school unexpectedly
2. **First Attendance Letter:** Shortly after the first half term of the year, parents of students with less than 90% attendance will be sent a letter pointing out that attendance is not satisfactory and requesting an improvement. Regular attendance reviews will be carried out thereafter at approximately four weekly intervals for the rest of the year.

At each attendance review thereafter, **First Attendance Letters** will be sent to parents of students who fall below 95% attendance for the **first time**

3. **Second Attendance Letter:** At the attendance review points, **Second Attendance Letters** will be sent to the parents of students whose overall attendance has remained below 95% since they received the **First Attendance Letter**. Parents will be invited to meet with the **Head of Year** to discuss the reason for unsatisfactory attendance and a timetable of steps to bring about improvement before the next review
4. **Third Attendance Letter:** At the attendance review points, **Third Attendance Letters** will be sent to the parents of students whose overall attendance has remained below 95% since they met with the Head of Year following the **Second Attendance Letter**. Parents will be invited to meet with the **Deputy Head** to agree steps to bring about improvement within a timescale of up to 4 weeks, set by the Deputy Head
5. If the school judges that sufficient improvement has not occurred within the stipulated timescale, parents will be invited to meet with the Headteacher to discuss the matter.

It should be borne in mind that the schedule set out above could potentially cover as much as half of an academic year. Whilst the school will always try to be understanding about the causes of persistent absence and try to support individual student needs, where attendance falls far short of our expectations despite repeated interventions, it may be necessary to refer to the Local Authority Attendance Compliance Service for consideration of legal action on the grounds of non-attendance.



Appendix 2

**Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School**  
**Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time**  
**(This form consists of two pages)**

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to their educational progress. **THERE IS NO ENTITLEMENT** to parents / carers to take a child out of school during term time, however you may apply to the school for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013). If the absence is not authorised and the leave is taken, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent / carer for each child taken out of school. Failure to submit a leave of absence request will result in the absence being unauthorised and a referral to the Local Authority who may again issue a Penalty Notice as above.

**Please note: If you have previously received a Penalty Notice for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance or been the subject of a prosecution for any child in relation to irregular school attendance, you may not be given the opportunity to pay a further Penalty Notice; your case may proceed directly to court.**

Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school.

I would like to request permission for leave of absence for my child a pupil registered at your school for the reasons detailed below (further information can be attached if required).

**Child's full name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Child's Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Reg Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child's full address and postcode:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First date of absence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Last date of absence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of return to school:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**absent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of school days**

**Reason for request** (please give full details, further details can be attached to this form):

**FULL name of person making request:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship** \_\_\_\_\_ **to**  
**child:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full address and postcode (if different from child's above):** \_\_\_\_\_

**If child above does not reside with you, does the resident parent agree with this application: YES/ NO**

**Signature of parent/carer with whom child resides:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of signature:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School**  
**Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time**

**Childs Forename and Surname:**

**Child's Date of Birth:**

**Child's Year Group:**

**Child's Class / Reg:**

**Dear (insert parents Title, full forename, and surname):**

**Re: Application for Leave of Absence from School during term time**

**Date of application received:**

**Date of response from school:**

**Percentage attendance year to date:**

**Number of sessions absent this academic year:**

**Number of which are authorised**

**Number of which are unauthorised**

**Have the family of this child been issued with a Penalty Notice in the previous twelve calendar months, YES / NO (please circle) If YES please state how many:**

**Total in previous twelve calendar months (please note if applicable):**

**Your application for leave of absence as detailed above has been:**

**Authorised (number of sessions absent authorised):**

**Unauthorised (number of sessions absent unauthorised):**

**This is for the reason stated below:**

**Headteacher Name:**

**Headteacher signature:**

**Date:**