

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School



Attendance Policy

Authorised by Resolution of the Governing Body of the Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School on: 1st July 2026

Signature:

Effective date of the policy: 1st July 2026

Review date of policy: July 2027 or earlier as and when required

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

1. Introduction

At Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School, we believe that outstanding attendance is fundamental to academic achievement, personal development, wellbeing and safeguarding. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve their full potential, develop positive relationships, and benefit from the wider opportunities that school provides.

Regular attendance is a shared responsibility between students, parents/carers and the school. We are committed to working in partnership with families to promote and support good attendance and punctuality.

The Department for Education (DfE) expects all schools to promote a culture in which good attendance is valued and where barriers to attendance are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

2. Why Attendance Matters

Poor attendance can have a significant impact on a student's progress, attainment, wellbeing and future opportunities.

Understanding attendance percentages:

Attendance	Equivalent Time Missed
95%	Half a day missed every two weeks
90%	One day missed every two weeks
85%	One and a half days missed every two weeks
80%	One full day missed every week

A student whose attendance is 80% throughout their secondary education will miss approximately one full year of schooling by the end of Year 11.

Students whose attendance falls below 90% are classified nationally as **Persistently Absent (PA)** and will receive additional monitoring and support.

3. Legal Responsibilities

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an efficient full-time education through regular school attendance.

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School will work in accordance with:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE)
- Essex County Council Attendance Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

4. Expectations of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Notify the school on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence.
- Provide reasons and supporting evidence for absences when requested.
- Avoid arranging holidays during term time.
- Make medical and dental appointments outside school hours whenever possible.
- Engage with the school where attendance concerns arise.

Examples of unacceptable reasons for absence include:

- Minor Illnesses (www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school)
- Shopping trips
- Birthdays or celebrations
- Looking after younger siblings
- Staying at home due to illness of another family member
- Unauthorised holidays or day trips
- Truancy
- Oversleeping or late arrival

5. Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Headteacher may only authorise leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances.

Family holidays, leisure activities and visits to relatives will not normally be authorised.

Requests for leave must be submitted in writing, in advance using the school's Leave of Absence Request Form.

Unauthorised leave may result in a Penalty Notice being issued by Essex County Council.

6. Reporting Absence

If a student is unable to attend school, parents/carers must:

- Contact the school before 8.30am on the first day of absence.
- Continue to notify the school each day of absence unless otherwise agreed.
- Provide supporting medical evidence where appropriate.

Where no reason for absence is received, the school will contact parents/carers as part of its safeguarding responsibilities.

7. Punctuality

Punctuality is an important aspect of attendance.

Students are expected to:

- Arrive on the school site by 8.40am.
- Be present and ready for registration by 8.45am.
- The morning registration session runs from 8.50am to 9.10am.
- Students arriving after registration has begun will be recorded as late. If there is a significant travel delay, this will be coded accordingly.
- Students arriving after the close of registration will receive an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session in accordance with attendance regulations.
- Students that accumulate 3 or more late marks in a two-week cycle will be issued with a Head of Year Detention.
- Where students accumulate repeated late marks, the school will contact parents/carers and implement appropriate support and intervention. We may sanction if necessary.

8. School Procedures for Monitoring Attendance

Attendance is monitored daily by Form Tutors, Pastoral Leaders and the Attendance Team.

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality regularly.
- Contact families where attendance concerns emerge.
- Identify patterns of absence.
- Provide early support and intervention.
- Work collaboratively with external agencies where required.
- Maintain accurate attendance records in line with statutory guidance.

Where a student is absent without explanation:

- Parents/carers will receive a first-day contact.
- Follow-up communication will be made if no response is received.
- Attendance concerns will be escalated where necessary.

9. Attendance Support and Early Intervention

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School follows the DfE principle of "Support First".

Where attendance begins to decline, the school will seek to understand the reasons and provide appropriate support.

Support may include:

- Blue Return to School Form completed by Form Tutor with the student following 2 days absence.
- Attendance meetings with families.
- Pastoral support.
- Wellbeing support.
- SENCO involvement (if appropriate).
- Early Help referrals.
- Multi-agency working.

The school recognises that some students experience barriers to attendance, including medical needs, SEND, mental health difficulties, anxiety and emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA).

10. "Let's Talk... We Miss You"

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School supports Essex County Council's "Let's Talk... We Miss You" approach to attendance.

This guidance promotes compassionate, relational and informed conversations with students experiencing attendance difficulties. The focus is on understanding the reasons behind absence, building trust with families, identifying barriers and providing support before difficulties become entrenched.

The approach encourages schools and families to work together to improve attendance and wellbeing, particularly where attendance difficulties may be linked to anxiety, emotional wellbeing or other underlying concerns.

11. Persistent Absence

A student is considered Persistently Absent when attendance falls below 90%.

Students whose attendance reaches this threshold may be subject to:

- Attendance monitoring.
- Attendance action plans.
- Formal meetings with parents/carers.
- Targeted support interventions.
- Referral to external agencies where appropriate.

The school will work closely with families to improve attendance and remove barriers wherever possible.

12. Formal Attendance Procedures

Where attendance concerns continue despite support:

1. Attendance concern letter issued.
2. Attendance meeting arranged.
3. Attendance Action Plan implemented.
4. Review period monitored.
5. Referral to Essex County Council Attendance Compliance Team where appropriate.

In line with current national and Essex guidance, Penalty Notices may be requested for:

- Unauthorised term-time leave.
- Persistent unauthorised absence.
- Repeated unauthorised lateness.
- Truancy.

Current national regulations allow a first Penalty Notice to be issued at £160 per parent per child, reduced to £80 if paid within the specified timeframe. Further offences may result in increased sanctions or prosecution.

13. Safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding matter.

The school recognises that poor attendance can be an indicator of wider welfare concerns.

Any student whose attendance causes concern may be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and appropriate safeguarding procedures followed where necessary.

14. Post-16 Students

Sixth Form students are expected to maintain excellent attendance and punctuality. Therefore, the same expectations apply for Sixth Form students.

Poor attendance may impact:

- Bursary eligibility.
- References and predicted grades.
- Examination entry decisions.
- Progression opportunities.

Attendance will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with Department for Education and Essex County Council guidance.

