




# Beacon Academy Trust

A COMPELLING VISION FOR SUCCESS

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Approving Body	Trust
Date of First Approval	15 <sup>th</sup> June, 2017
Date of Last Amendment	
To be Reviewed	Annually
Responsible Officer	 BMAT MD, for and on behalf of the Trust.

## **I. INTRODUCTION – LEGAL DUTIES, PURPOSE AND SCOPE:**

1. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude.
2. BMAT has a legal duty to take an attendance register twice per day (once at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session) for all students of compulsory school age. The register must record whether the student was present, absent but authorised, absent but unauthorised. BMAT must ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or DfE as required.
3. BMAT has high expectations for attendance:
  - a. Students are expected to attend every lesson of every day, unless there is a valid, authorised reason for not doing so.
  - b. Students are expected to arrive punctually to registration at 8:25am and punctually to all lessons thereafter, until the school day ends at 15:15pm.
  - c. Poor punctuality will be sanctioned in accordance with Section V of this policy; truanting will be treated as a serious incident and sanctioned accordingly;
4. This policy aims to ensure that:
  - a. All members of the BMAT community, including members of staff, students and parents/carers, are clear on the obligations, expectations and procedures regarding attendance;
  - b. BMAT's high expectations for student attendance, as above, are understood, respected and met by all members of the BMAT community;
  - c. Members of BMAT staff understand and comply with procedures on attendance.

## **II. STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

5. All members of staff (including support staff and volunteers) are responsible for ensuring that students are encouraged to attend punctually and regularly.
6. School principals, senior leadership teams and SENCOs are responsible for developing and overseeing policies that punctual, regular attendance is encouraged and monitored.
7. Attendance officers are responsible for the day to day management of attendance data and reporting unauthorised absences/truanting to parents/carers.

8. SENCOs are responsible for being proactive in supporting students with special educational needs to attend school as punctually and as often as reasonably possible. Pastoral teams, led by directors of achievement and progress/heads of year, are responsible for supporting students with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH) to attend school as punctually and as often as reasonably possible.
9. All members of teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that punctuality and attendance are monitored consistently, accurately and effectively, at the beginning of every lesson.
10. Form tutors are responsible for monitoring the attendance and punctuality of their form groups across all lessons, identifying issues of poor attendance or punctuality and reporting those issues to directors of achievement and progress/heads of year.
11. Directors of achievement and progress/heads of year and key stage directors are responsible for monitoring and overseeing attendance and punctuality across year groups and/or key stages.
12. Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring and overseeing the attendance and punctuality of students within their subject area.

### **III. ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES.**

13. BMAT monitors attendance via SIMS; all members of teaching staff receive training on how to use SIMS during their induction:
  - a. Form tutors are required to take accurate attendance registers in every form session.
  - b. Teachers are required to take accurate attendance registers at the beginning of every lesson (within the first ten minutes).
  - c. Form tutors and teachers are required to record lateness on SIMS, including the number of minutes by which a student was late to a form session or lesson.
  - d. If a student has not arrived to a lesson within 10 minutes of the start time, then the teacher must record this fact on SIMS and use the on-call procedure to locate the missing student.

- e. BMAT attendance officers must contact parents/carers if their child does not arrive for the school day and if their child truants part-way through the school day.

14. Students are only allowed to be absent from school if they are too ill to attend or if their parents/carers have obtained advance permission from BMAT. Absences are categorised as follows:

- a. Illness - BMAT may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence to authorise an absence (e.g. an appointment card or prescription).  
Parents/carers should inform BMAT of unplanned sickness absences by telephoning the appropriate school reception, ideally before the start of the school day. If a student becomes too ill to attend lessons during the school day, BMAT will attempt to telephone parents/carers and arrange for them to collect their child. If a student is absent due to long-term sickness, BMAT will work with parents/carers and any external agencies involved, to ensure that work is sent home for the student, where appropriate, and to ensure the student's successful reintegration.
- b. Medical/dental appointments. Where possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students must attend school for part of the day and parents/carers must provide proof of the appointment.
- c. Other authorised circumstances. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to obtain permission for planned absences in advance, by writing to the appropriate school principal. BMAT appreciates the multi-faith nature of its community and that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holidays or weekends. Written requests for absences for religious festivals will be authorised up to a maximum of two days per academic year.
- d. Excluded (no alternative provision made). Exclusion is categorised as an authorised absence. Arrangements will be made for work to be sent home.
- e. Unauthorised. Absence will not be authorised unless parents/carers have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted by the appropriate BMAT school principal. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include birthdays and closure of a sibling's school.

15. Term-time holidays: By law, students are only allowed to go on term-time holidays if their parents/carers obtain advance permission from the appropriate school principal and if exceptional circumstances exist. It is up to school principals to decide how many, if any, school days a student is allowed to miss for a holiday. Parents/carers may be prosecuted and fined for taking their child on a term-time holiday without obtaining permission from their school principal.

16. Responding to leave of absence requests:

- a. All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing outlining the conditions of leave granted.
- b. If permission is not granted and the parent takes their child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised. BMAT may report parents/carers to the appropriate authorities.

17. BMAT recognises that poor attendance may be an indication of difficulties in a child's life; and that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance (e.g. those with SEN, physical or mental health needs and looked after children). Where appropriate, BMAT will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance, including but not limited to:

- a. Discussion with parents/carers and students;
- b. Parenting contracts;
- c. Report cards;
- d. Referrals to support agencies;
- e. Additional learning support; and
- f. Legal sanctions where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs.

18. Legal Sanctions against Parents/Carers:

- a. Parents/carers who fail to ensure that their child attends school on a full time basis without good reason may be issued with a range of sanctions.
- b. Penalty notices will be considered when a student is absent and the absence has not been authorised by the school. A penalty notice allows parents to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £120 fine is paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.
- c. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

- d. Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. BMAT will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school.
- e. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence. A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.
- f. Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.
- g. A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent; it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

19. Traveller children are expected to attend school as regularly and frequent as possible, however:

- a. To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution, they are safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year, provided their family is engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and provided the child is attending school as regularly as that trade or business permits.
- b. A BMAT school will be regarded as a Traveller child's base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months.
- c. BMAT will authorise absence of Traveller children if it is satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.
- d. Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when the child is on roll and attending another visited school, undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service, or undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

20. Removal from roll - in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, students may be removed from roll and lose their school place if s/he:

- a. Fails to return after 20 days continuous unauthorised absence or an extended holiday and contact has not been possible;
- b. Has been permanently excluded;
- c. Has been in custody for more than four months;
- d. Transfers school;
- e. Cannot return to school before ending compulsory school age;
- f. Dies.