



STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Approving Body	Trust
Date of Last Review	November 2022
Statutory (Y/N)	N
Responsible Officer	BMAT CEO for and on behalf of the Trust

I. INTRODUCTION – DUTIES, EXPECTATIONS AND PURPOSE

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 monitor attendance 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 and authorised, or absent and unauthorised. BMAT must report attendance data 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 to all lessons thereafter, until the end of the school day at 15:15pm; and
 - c. Poor punctuality will be sanctioned in line with this Policy and with the [Student Behaviour Policy](#). Truancing will be sanctioned as serious misconduct.
4. This policy aims to ensure that:
 - a. All members of the BMAT community are clear on the obligations, expectations and procedures regarding attendance;
 - b. BMAT's high expectations for student attendance are understood, respected and met by all members of the BMAT community;
 - c. BMAT staff understand and comply with procedures on attendance.

II. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

5. 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.

III. STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6. The local governing body (LGB) is responsible for making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties and regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
7. All members of staff (including support staff and volunteers) are responsible for encouraging students to attend lessons punctually and regularly and are expected to lead by example.
8. School principals/co-headteachers, senior leadership teams and SENCOs are responsible for developing and overseeing policies to ensure that punctual, regular attendance is encouraged and monitored.
9. The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is responsible for leading attendance across the whole school, having an oversight of data analysis and devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
10. BMAT Attendance officers are responsible for the daily management of attendance data on SIMS and for reporting unauthorised absences or truanting to parents/carers.
11. SENCOs are responsible for supporting students with SEND needs to attend school as punctually and as often as reasonably possible.
12. Pastoral teams, led by Heads of Key Stage/Heads of School and 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.
13. Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that punctuality and attendance are monitored on SIMS consistently, accurately and effectively, at the beginning of every lesson.
14. 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 them to directors of achievement and progress.
15. Heads of School and Heads of Year are responsible for monitoring and overseeing attendance and punctuality across their cohort(s) and for acting to address patterns of poor attendance or punctuality within those cohorts.
16. Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring and overseeing the attendance and punctuality of students within their subject area, and for acting to address patterns of poor attendance or punctuality within those cohorts.
17. Designated Teachers (see the [BMAT Designated Teacher Policy](#)) are responsible for leading the response to poor attendance or punctuality by "looked after" and "previously looked

after” children. They will do this in partnership with key internal (e.g. SENCOs and Senior Leadership Teams) external (e.g. social workers) stakeholders.

18. BMAT admin/office staff will take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
19. Parents/carers are responsible for making sure their child attends every day and every timetabled lesson on time. They will call the school to report their child’s absence before the start of the day.
20. Pupils are expected to attend school every day on time.

IV. ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES.

21. BMAT monitors attendance via SIMS; all members of teaching staff and relevant members of support staff receive training on how to use SIMS during their induction:
 - a. Form tutors take accurate attendance registers in every form session.
 - b. Teachers take accurate attendance registers at the beginning of every lesson (within the first ten minutes).
 - c. Form tutors and teachers 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 session within 10 minutes of the start time, this will be recorded on SIMS and the on-call procedure will be used.
22. BMAT attendance officers will contact parents/carers if their child does not arrive for the school day or if their child truants part-way through the school day.Students are only allowed to be absent from school if they are too ill to attend or if their parents/carers have obtained 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 before the start of the school day. If a student becomes too ill to attend lessons during the school day, BMAT will attempt to arrange for them to be collected by their parents/carers. 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, as appropriate, and to ensure the student’s successful reintegration.

- b. Medical/dental appointments. 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 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. External exclusion (no alternative provision made) is an authorised absence. Work will be sent home, in line with the [External and Permanent Exclusion Policy](#).
 - 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.
23. Term-time holidays: By law, students may only 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 may miss for a holiday. Parents/carers may be prosecuted and fined for taking their child on a term-time holiday without obtaining permission.
24. 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.
25. BMAT recognises that poor attendance may be an indication of other difficulties and that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. As 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.

26. 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. 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 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 uphold their responsibilities.
 - e. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if s/he registered at a school and 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, which may be extended to include the child and any agencies offering support, to resolve any issues around poor attendance.
27. Concerns about the attendance or punctuality of "looked after" and "previously looked after children": BMAT appreciates the additional challenges that these students can face, and is committed to giving them the best chance of success and avoiding their exclusion where possible. In line with the [BMAT Designated Teacher Policy](#), the designated teacher(s) at all BMAT schools will agree early interventions with their school attendance officer, the carer, social worker and other professionals including the "Virtual School".
28. 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 within 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
29. 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.

V. MONITORING AND ANALYSING ATTENDANCE DATA

25. BMAT schools will monitor attendance and absence data half term across the schools at an individual and cohort level. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Local Governing Body (LGB) termly.
- BMAT schools will analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils and cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this to provide targeted support for these pupils and their families.