BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Review Responsibility:	Assistant Headteacher - Behaviour & Attendance
Frequency of Review:	1 year
Date Approved:	Jun 25
Approved By:	Board of Trustees - Pastoral & Wellbeing Committee
Next Review Due By:	Jun 26

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Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

● Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils

● Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance

● Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

● Ensuring every pupil 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

● Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons

The DfE's guidance outlines the following expectations of working together to improve attendance:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](#) and [school](#) [attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016](#) [amendments)](#)
- [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Roles and Responsibilities

School Staff

Role	Responsibility	Including
Trustees	Whole school	- Set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents. - Monitoring of processes and attendance figures for the whole school.
Headteacher	Whole school	- Set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents. - Monitoring of processes and attendance figures for the whole school. - Fixed penalty notices
Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)	Targeted Students	- Data and reporting Accountability - Liaising with Attendance Officer - Liaising with internal and external agencies Home visits - Parent meetings - Overseeing reduced timetables
Attendance Officer	All Students	- Data and reporting Daily attendance calls Attendance coding - Weekly/termly attendance reports and analysis Parent letters - Home visits - Reporting of reduced timetables to LA/EHE

		● Liaising with internal and external agencies including Education Welfare Officers ● Fixed penalty notices
Head of Year	Early Intervention	● Analysis of termly/weekly attendance data Liaising with Attendance Officer ● Liaising with internal agencies Organisation of reduced timetables Parent meetings
Tutor	Prevention	● Registering students in a timely manner Delivering key attendance messages Tracking tutee attendance weekly Attendance conversations ● Parent phone calls
Teacher	Prevention	● Registering students in a timely manner Tracking student attendance to lessons ● Providing work for absent students where appropriate Parent phone calls
Support Staff	Role dependent	● Registering students in a timely manner Parent phone calls ● Providing support for students

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

● All natural parents, whether they are married or not

● All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person

● Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Parents are expected to:

● Make sure their child attends school every day, on time

● Call the school to report their child's absence on each day of absence

● Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

● Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

● Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority

● Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the child's Head of Year, whose details can be found on the school website.

Information about the cause of each absence is always required. Parents should explain the nature of illness, not just say 'illness' or 'unwell'. A signed appointment card or prescription/medicine label can be provided where medical attention has been sought.

Extended or repeated periods of absence may require a medical note or hospital discharge papers.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend every timetabled session, on time

Recording Attendance

School Staff

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is (see guidance on school attendance for DfE Attendance Codes):

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.40 and ends at 3.15. Pupils are expected to be on site from 8.40 to avoid late marks. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 and will be kept open until 9.10. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.15 and will be kept open until 2.30.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence.

Absences should be reported on Arbor before 8am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. If Arbor is unavailable, then a call must be made to 01795424194 before 8am.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

When a child has a sickness bug, we do not operate a 48 hour clear policy. This means that your child is expected back into school the next day provided they are well.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate

form of evidence. We 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment via Arbor. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness & Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive by 8.40am for registration at 8:45am.

If students arrive after this time, they must sign in. Students arriving after the register has closed (9.10) will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registration is from 2.15pm-2.30pm. Students late after this time will be marked as late by their lesson 5 teacher, and this will also count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Lateness is tracked by Heads of Year and Form Tutors. If a pupil is late 3 times in a week, they will be allocated an Leadership Group detention on either a Wednesday or a Friday in the following week. Persistent or disruptive lateness across term will also be sanctioned.

Following Up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

● Send an Arbor message to the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school does not get a response, a phone call will be made. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact external agencies where necessary.

● Identify whether the absence is approved or not

● Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent

● Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary (including a home visit if this is deemed appropriate). If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

● Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer

● Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance

● Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

● Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, the school may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

Reporting to Parents

The DfE expects schools to report pupil attendance to parents regularly. We appreciate that attendance figures can sometimes cause confusion for parents and therefore we have created our "Categorisation of Student Absence" table below:

Percentage	School Action	Including
95-100%	Prevention	Assemblies, tutor time activities, displays
90-95%	Early Intervention	Monitoring by Head of Year, parental meetings, in-school support
Less than 90%	Targeted	Monitoring by AHT Attendance and AHT Key Stage, attendance officer, in-school support, external agencies (such as Educational Welfare Officer, Inclusion and Attendance Service, Early Help, Children's Social Care)

Whilst 90% in other contexts may seem like an impressive figure, in school attendance it is referred to as "Persistent Absence" and research has shown that being in this category can cause ongoing academic and pastoral issues. Those below 50% are referred to as "Severe Absence" and face a more extreme set of issues.

We communicate with parents about attendance in two ways:

- Arbor message each half term, which outlines the number of days absent in the previous half term
- A formal letter each term to those who fall within the "Early Intervention" and "Targeted" categories above

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term-Time Absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil 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 background context behind the request. Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.

- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. A leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in a protest activity during school hours.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence. Requests should be made via Arbor. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Children Missing from Education (CME)

No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school

Sanctions

Borden Grammar School will make use of the full range of potential sanctions to tackle poor attendance, including, but not limited to, those listed below. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis. The Department for Education has clear guidance on measures to be taken ahead of legal intervention, shown below:

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention

Voluntary support

Working in partnership with pupils and parents to support in school, helping parents to access services of their own accord and/or a voluntary whole family plan to tackle barriers to attendance.

Formal support

A formal attendance contract agreed between the pupil, parent, school and/or local authority.

Progressing to a legally binding Education Supervision Order in the Family Court if there is non-engagement and deemed necessary.

Attendance prosecution

Where all other routes have failed or not deemed appropriate the case may be considered for a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Statutory children's social care involvement

Where there are safeguarding concerns and an Education Supervision Order is not appropriate or has not been successful, the case should be considered for s.17 or s.47 statutory social care intervention.

Improved attendance

Improved attendance

Penalty Notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

● Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

● Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil

● Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

● Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

At Borden Grammar School we promote attendance in a number of ways based on the category students fall within:

Percentage	School Action	Promotion
95-100%	Prevention	• Monitoring by Form Tutor • Displays regarding attendance are updated regularly • Attendance messages half-termly • Attendance data is shared weekly during form time • Rewards are given on a termly basis for those with good or improved attendance • Termly newsletter update • Late procedures • Breakfast club

90-95%	Early Intervention	As above, alongside: ● Monitoring by Head of Year ● Parental meetings with Heads of Year ● Penalty notices ● Attendance letters ● Attendance support plan ● In-school support such as peer-mentoring, School Welfare Officer or pastoral interventions.
Less than 90%	Targeted	As above, alongside: ● Monitoring by AHT Pastoral ● Parental meetings with AHT Pastoral ● Attendance support plan ● Home visits ● Alternative working arrangements (e.g. library) ● Reduced timetable/Off-site provision ● In-school support such as peer-mentoring, School Welfare Officer or pastoral interventions. ● External agencies (such as Educational Welfare Officer, Inclusion and Attendance Service, Early Help, Children's Social Care)

Students with Barriers to Attendance

We understand that there are a number of complex barriers faced by some students when it comes to school attendance. This can be caused by mental or physical ill health, or Special Educational needs. The promotions outlined above apply to this group of students regardless of their attendance percentage. Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that are related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Pupils Returning to School After a Lengthy or Unavoidable Period of Absence

Some pupils will have experienced lengthy or unavoidable absences from school. When this is the case, we will work to re-integrate them with the input of all stakeholders. The process will start with a meeting including the child, parents and key school representatives to formulate a reintegration plan. This will be reviewed as frequently as required. Actions on the plan may include, but are not limited to:

- Alternative working environment (e.g. Library)
- Reduced timetable/Off-site provision
- Workload concessions, such as a reduction in expectation of homework completion
- Catch-up work
- Internal support such as peer mentoring, School Welfare Officer or pastoral intervention
- External support where necessary

Attendance Monitoring

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half- termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. This is to:
- Identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance

● Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

● Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

DfE Attendance Monitoring

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the Board of Trustees three times a year.

Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

● Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis

● Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)

● Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)

● Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

● Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing Persistent & Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

● Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

● Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

● Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  ● Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  ● Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  ● Explain the help that is available
  ● Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe

absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2 above)

Appendix 1 - Covid-19 Absence Guidance

Borden Grammar School follows Government advice regarding absence due to Covid, for the latest guidance please refer to this link:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#Children