



GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST



THE BRAMBLE
ACADEMY

Attendance policy

Approved by:

Panayiota Theodosiou
Principal

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Next review due by:

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Introduction

The Bramble Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils. We believe it is extremely important for pupils to attend regularly and on time. This will give them the best opportunity to progress and succeed at school.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent / carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason may result in prosecution.

At The Bramble Academy we:

- provide a welcoming and caring environment where all members of the Academy feel secure and valued
- expect students to arrive on time every day
- will support parents in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- believe leave of absence should not be taken during term-time. We will not authorise requests for leave of absence during term-time, except in exceptional/ unavoidable circumstances

How to notify the Academy of an absence

- If your child is unable to attend school due to illness or unavoidable circumstances, please contact the school on each day of absence by telephoning the school office on 01623 635 928, email at office@brambleacademy.org or using the Arbor app.
- Please inform us of any planned absence in advance, this includes unavoidable medical appointments during the school day. Evidence of the medical appointment will be needed.
- To inform us about a planned absence, please complete exceptional absences form which can be located in the school office or be requested from the school office.

1. Aim

Ensuring all pupils have high attendance is a key priority of the academy. Pupils are entitled to a full-time education and we know that pupils with high attendance do better at school than those with high absence rates. We also know that absence can be a sign of other risks in a young person's life. 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 \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

The aim of this document is to set out how we create and maintain a positive culture that supports and values good attendance. It includes how we aim to:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- 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

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of GAT's Attendance Policy. The Trust policy details the relevant legislation and guidance documents. In particular, this policy carefully follows DfE guidance in this area.

Our work on attendance is linked closely to our approaches to safeguarding and behaviour.

3. How we promote a culture of high expectations in attendance and punctuality

We value the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Our days are focused on learning and the benefit of being in school every day to improve learning. Good attendance and punctuality are celebrated through the progress in learning.

To support this, we encourage positive partnerships with our families, listening to them to remove any possible barriers. We explore internal and external avenues to support our families and children with positive school attendance.

We build a whole school culture. Good attendance is everybody's concern. Assemblies and targeted information keep the profile of attendance high amongst children, while tailored training is delivered through staff workshops to provide staff with specific information updates to carry out their role including administrative, pastoral and senior leaders.

The profile of good attendance is shared throughout the school community so that there is an understanding and ownership of the school, class and individual attendance data. Information to parents and carers is clear; explicitly linking attendance to learning. It's about raising the profile through planned whole school and class activities. In short, everyone should lead and model the importance of good attendance.

We understand that there may be barriers to good attendance, and these require sensitive and detailed unpicking. Positive relationships with parents and carers are essential. An important factor for success is deciding who is best placed to build the initial relationship, to listen, so that barriers can be removed. This may vary on an individual basis and may not always be the head of school, attendance officer or Family Key Worker. It could be a trusted class teacher, pastoral worker or teaching assistant but what is important is beginning the discussion.

4. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30am will be kept open until 8:40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:50pm or 12:20pm in EYFS, and will be kept open until 1:00pm or 12:30pm in EYFS.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at a school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day when the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the academy.

Note - 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)

Parents / Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the academy on **01623 635928** or **office@brambleacademy.org** to report their child's absence before 8:50am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, routine appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the academy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to the trust
- Monitoring the impact of processes and attendance strategies
- Monitoring the impact of work with local partners to improve attendance in identified cases
- Working with local partners when formal procedures such as parental contracts, supervision orders and penalty notices are required
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the Academy's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
 - The attendance champion is Panayiota Theodosiou and can be contacted via telephone **01623 635928** or email **office@brambleacademy.org**

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the principal
- Working with Early Help to tackle persistent absence
- The attendance officer is Andrew English can be contacted via telephone **01623 635928** or email **office@brambleacademy.org**

Admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/ carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the academy system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer.

Class teachers will:

- Record attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the office by 8:40am for the first session, and 12:20pm (for EYFS) and 12:50pm for the second session.

5. Recording attendance

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.

We will use the national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

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

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am or as soon as practically possible by 01623 635 928, email at office@brambleacademy.org.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or the absence is longer than 3 days, the academy may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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 academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the academy in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make routine 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/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. This can be made through the school office.

Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the academy cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the academy may conduct a home visit or contact the police.
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the academy will consider involving an education welfare officer or similar

Reporting to parents/ carers

The academy will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through the Arbor app and termly reports, at parents' evening or at the end of the academic year

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Principal can only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' and if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

The academy 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, where possible before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. Evidence may be required to support any request for leave of absence.

Family holidays should not be taken in term time as they damage progress and continuity of learning. We will not authorise any holidays, unless in very exceptional circumstances.

Legal sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions including, but not limited to, penalty notices to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis and we will use the local authority arrangements for doing so.

7. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where a pupil is absent due to mental or physical complex barriers, we will work with families and agencies to explore support from the local authority, Early Help or ELSA to create a personalised attendance action plan for the pupil and family.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil is absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND, we will work with families and agencies to gain an understanding of potential barriers. Working with families, we will explore support from Early Help, internal support through ELSA, exploring a part-time timetable or attending our wrap-around care.

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 related to the pupil's needs, the academy must inform the local authority.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where a pupil is returning to school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, a meeting with parents or carers will be arranged to support with a positive return to school. Options such as a meet and greet, reasonable adjustments to be made or additional support through ELSA.

8. How we monitor attendance

Monitoring attendance

The academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the academy and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term by the trust and DfE and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.

Analysing attendance

The academy will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The academy 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 severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- 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 and 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.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy considers to be vulnerable, at risk of or persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance such as Early Help, including internal and external agencies.
- Carry out a personalized plan to support the removal of barriers.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the trust or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Principal.