



THE BRAMBLE ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

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1. GDPR

This policy has been reviewed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which will replace the Data Protection Act 1998 from 25th May 2018. The introduction of GDPR has resulted in changes to many existing data protection rules and regulations that educational establishments adhere to. The Evolve Trust has undertaken a full data protection audit and have ensured that appropriate changes that have been made to data protection rules and regulations have been adhered to in full. The Evolve Trust has carried out all additional compliance requirements and fully accepts their duty of care to ensure individuals' data is kept safe and secure, resulting in increased compliance in our systems, processes and policies.

2. 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.

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:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality
- Follow up absences
- Communicate and work with families to reduce absence
- Monitor absences and analyse patterns of absence
- Work with local partners to support high attendance and reduce absence

3. Legislation & 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.

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

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. At The Bramble Academy we work with parents and pupils to understand the potential barriers and provide the additional support that some pupils might need. Our Family Intervention Officer meets regularly with pupils and parents to build partnerships with families, listening to them and providing support for pupils that have had absences to enable them to successfully reintegrate into school.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Write or phone you if there are concerns with regards to attendance. (Early communication is always best).
- Include within the pupil's annual reports to parents an attendance

breakdown for the year.

- Celebrate good attendance by displaying and rewarding class achievements.
- Award a class attendance trophy in assembly on a weekly basis.

5. Our expectations of attendance and punctuality

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:30 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:40. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:50.

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 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.

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day on time.

Contact the academy to report their child's absence before 08:40 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return. This can be done by calling the office on 01623 635928, emailing the office on office@brambleacademy.org or through using the Weduc App (See Appendix A).

Provide the academy with more than 2 emergency contact numbers for their child.

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

Provide medical evidence should appointments be necessary within the school day.

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Class teachers are responsible for:

- All class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the office by 08:45 each morning and by 12:55 in the afternoon.

The academy admin/office 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 to the Family Intervention officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

The Family Intervention 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 external education enforcement officers to tackle persistent absence.
- The Attendance Officer is Mr Andrew English and can be contacted via Telephone 01623 635928 Ext 503 or via Email on office@brambleacademy.org

The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the academy.

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Evaluating and monitoring processes.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Working with local partners to implement bespoke strategies to improve attendance for those children with persistent absence or severe absence.
- The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Hannah Garbett and can be contacted via Telephone 01623 635928 and/or Email office@brambleacademy.org

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.

6. 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.

It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Absent.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- We will use the DfE codes to detail the attendance and absences.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 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 08:40 or as soon as practically possible by calling 01623 635928, by emailing office@brambleacademy.org or through Weduc reporting.

We will mark absence due to 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, 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 in advance.

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 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 done using the 'Application for exceptional absence in term time (Holiday form)' available from 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 L
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code U

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they miss out on learning opportunities and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Children who arrive late to school miss out on the Principal's morning greeting and may find it more difficult to start the day positively. Late arriving pupils disrupt lessons: it can also create anxiety for the child which in turn may create further absence. The school will contact parents/carers of pupils for whom lateness and punctuality is identified as an issue to work with them to help address the issue.

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 will conduct a home visit.
- 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 monitor attendance and inform parents about their child's attendance should this be under 96%. A meeting with parents/carers may also be set up in order to improve attendance and identify any barriers to good attendance.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as but not limited to:

- Death or serious illness of a parent or sibling.
- Return of a parent from active service (forces).
- Approved public performances.

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, at least two weeks before the absence. Evidence may be required to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (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 academy, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- 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

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or not appropriate (such as an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority can take forward legal intervention to formalise support and / or enforce attendance. This includes fines or a penalty notice. The arrangements for these procedures are found <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/127161/code-of-conduct-for-penalty-notices.pdf>

The Local Authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher or Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice

8. How we monitor attendance

Attendance monitoring

The Bramble Academy will

- Share attendance data daily through WONDE with the DfE, LA and Trust.
- Engage with termly Target Support Meetings with the LA School Attendance Support Team.
- Engage with locality based Attendance Networks (facilitated by LA).
- Work with Social Care, Police and Health as Attendance Partners.
- Deliver Home Visits and Parent Contract meetings as necessary.
- Lead and participate with EHA and TAF with an Attendance Improvement lens.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and implement effective strategies.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
- Where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as home visits, an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

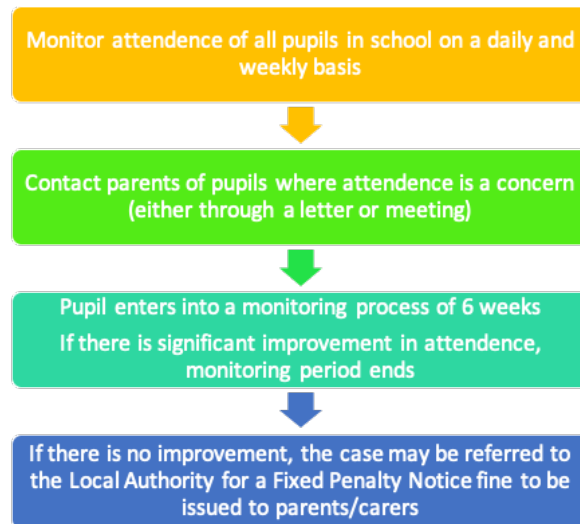
Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school compares attendance data to the national average, and shares this with the governing body.

Monitoring attendance

The Bramble 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. The academy will compare attendance data to the trust and national average.



Analysing attendance

The Bramble 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 Bramble Academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the class teachers and other academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

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:

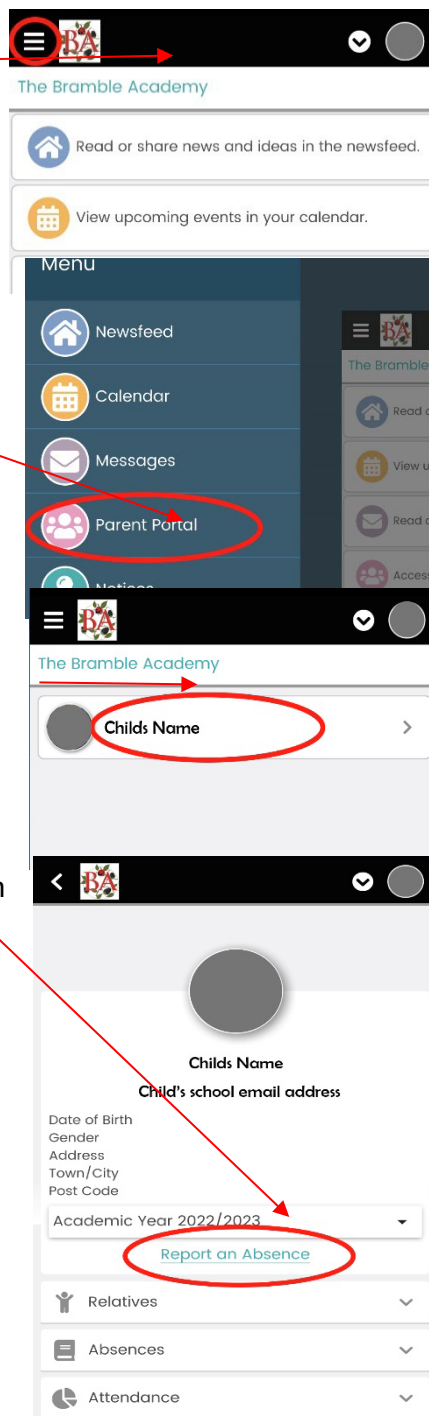
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, at risk of or persistently or severely absence to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance such as Early Help.

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.

10. Appendix A - How to Report an Absence using Weduc

1. Open your Weduc App and select the menu bars from the top left on your screen
2. Select 'Parent Portal' from the menu which appears.
3. Select the child you wish to report an absence for (if you have more than one child in school they will all show on this screen)
4. Select Report an absence from the child's information page



The image shows the 'Report Absence' form. The title is 'Report Absence'. Below it is a header with 'Child's Name'. The form contains the following fields:

- First Day of Absence: 05/10/2022 08:00 (circled in red)
- Expected Return Date: 05/10/2022 08:00 (circled in red)
- A red warning icon and text: 'Return date must be after start date.'
- A text input field: 'Enter a reason for this absence' (circled in red)

 At the bottom, there are icons for a camera, gallery, and document. A red arrow points from the '5. Input the information...' instruction to the 'Report an Absence' button in the previous screenshot, and another red arrow points to the 'Send' icon (a paper plane) in the top right corner of the form.

5. Input the information for the child's absence and then click then the send icon