

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## Version 1.0

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**\*Every School/UTC will have a Senior Attendance Champion**

## Aims

**Senior Attendance Champion:** Each school/UTC within the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT) will designate a Senior Attendance Champion (Senior Leader) to oversee and implement attendance initiatives.

**Aims:** The Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT) is dedicated to maximising educational opportunities and academic achievement for all students. To ensure that students receive the full benefit of their educational experience at BFLPT, it is essential that they

maintain excellent attendance and punctuality. The Trust aspires to achieve 100% attendance for all students.

BFLPT is committed to actively promoting regular attendance and discouraging any form of unjustified absence. The Trust acknowledges that fostering good attendance and punctuality not only supports academic success but also equips students with the necessary discipline and responsibility required in their future professional lives.

## Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the School/UTC have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

### Board of Trustees and Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Trustees and CEO are responsible for approving this policy and ensuring that the policy is monitored.

Local Governing Boards, Executive Headteachers, Headteacher Principals and Heads of School will:

- ensure that the School/UTC attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- ensure the schools/UTC have the systems and processes in place to implement this policy.
- ensure the whole School/UTC ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality.
- ensure that this policy is shared with staff and provide adequate training and resources.
- monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience, utilising attendance data to inform strategic planning.

In the absence of the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher/Principal, or Head of School, the senior leadership team will assume the day-to-day responsibilities.

Teachers will:

- welcome and value the attendance of all children and young people to lessons.
- ensure all students/pupils are accurately registered.
- ensure that students/pupils know when the register is being taken.
- identify pupil absence from lessons and take appropriate action.
- identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

Tutors (Secondary) will:

- discuss absence and attendance weekly with children and young people.

- identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- work with identified children and young people, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets.
- ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are sent to the Attendance Office or relevant persons.

Heads of Year/Learning Managers (Secondary) will:

- monitor absence and attendance regularly, by use of the weekly Cumulative Attendance report.
- discuss absence and attendance concerns with children and young people.
- contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- support students/pupils to improve their attendance.
- promote attendance through assemblies.
- work with other members of staff to share information and support children and young people and their parents/carers to improve attendance.

Attendance Teams will:

- Will issue the Cumulative Attendance report to relevant staff on a weekly basis.
- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the School/UTC, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified and provide support to improve their child's attendance.
- Will support children and young people to improve their attendance.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual children and young people.
- Will provide data to the Headteacher/Principal, Senior Leaders and the School/UTC Council on a regular basis.

Reception/Admin Teams will:

- receive calls and messages and log them from parents/carers regarding pupil absence.
- contact parents/carers regarding pupil absence. Record attendance and lates in line with the DfE registration codes.

## Principles

The overarching strategic approach to improving attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism, across all key groups, is captured by our following 6 principles:

## 1 Policies and procedures

The Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT), as a collective of local schools, has established comprehensive policies and procedures that are informed by the latest research and guidance. These are reinforced by explicit and clearly articulated best practice handbooks, ensuring consistency and clarity across all member schools. All policies and procedures are subject to regular review and updates to maintain their relevance and effectiveness.

The Trust adheres to all aspects of the Department for Education's (DfE) guidance, '**Working Together to Improve School Attendance**', using it to inform and enhance best practices. In fostering excellent attendance, BFLPT collaborates closely with the Local Authority, pooling resources and working in a supportive and unified manner to achieve shared objectives.

## 2 Personalisation

The Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT) provides a range of tailored support mechanisms within its academies to promote and sustain good attendance, addressing the unique needs of each pupil. Every pupil will receive individualised support, taking into consideration their specific circumstances and those of their family.

We are committed to working closely with families, children, and young people to identify any barriers to school attendance and to develop a personalised intervention plan. This approach is designed to ensure consistent attendance, which in turn, supports academic achievement and the broader well-being of the pupil.

In addition to the personalised support offered by the school/UTC, further assistance may involve collaboration with external agencies and/or the Local Authority attendance support team, where appropriate.

## 3 Practice

**High Expectations:** At Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT), we hold attendance in the highest regard, aspiring to set and maintain high standards for all students and their parents/carers. Our goal is to foster a culture where high attendance is the norm across all academies within the Trust, emphasising its importance as a collective priority.

**Monitoring:** Attendance data will be systematically monitored to identify patterns of poor attendance, with an emphasis on early identification and intervention. This information will be regularly shared with parents/carers to facilitate collaborative efforts in addressing and resolving any attendance issues.

**Listening and Understanding:** We are committed to working closely with students and parents/carers to understand the barriers to attendance. Together, we will explore solutions, ensuring that every interaction is conducted with dignity and respect. All

schools/UTC within the Trust will strive to build and maintain positive relationships between home and school.

**Facilitating Support:** We will assist students and their families in accessing the necessary support to overcome attendance barriers, both within and outside the school environment. This may include referrals to external agencies, early help initiatives, or the development of comprehensive family support plans.

**Formalising Support:** If voluntary support is not effective or is not being actively engaged with, school/UTC staff, in collaboration with external partners, will work with parents/carers to explain the potential consequences. We will ensure that structured support is in place, which may involve formal agreements such as a parenting contract or an education supervision order.

**Enforcement:** In cases where all other avenues have been exhausted and support efforts have failed or are not being engaged with, statutory intervention or prosecution will be pursued to safeguard the pupil's right to an education.

#### 4 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

In some instances, a student with complex needs may face challenges within the school/UTC that affect their attendance. Nevertheless, the school/UTC has a legal obligation to provide education, and parents/carers are legally required to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

If a statutory assessment for an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) is underway, the expectation is that the student/pupil will maintain full attendance throughout the assessment process. During this period, the attendance team must actively engage with the parent/carer to provide support, ensuring that the student continues to attend their current school. If necessary, the team will also facilitate alternative educational arrangements through the Local Authority or Alternative Provision to ensure that the student's/pupil's education is not disrupted.

To fulfil the school/UTC's legal duty and to meet the educational needs of the student/pupil, appropriate and individualised support must be implemented to guarantee that the student/pupil receives a suitable, full-time education.

Once an EHCP is granted, the Local Authority will conduct a formal consultation with the school(s) chosen by the parent/carer. This consultation process lasts 15 school days, during which time the student will remain on the school/UTC's roll. Following the consultation, the student may either continue at the current school/UTC or transfer to another establishment, depending on the parents' choice of school.

#### 5 Technology and Data

The BFLPT will use technology and data systems to accurately communicate, measure, and monitor student attendance in order to promote the value of school attendance and assist families. We will engage with parents and external agencies using a variety

of methods to ensure that the importance of school attendance is consistently promoted.

Data systems will also be utilised to record and submit statutory returns to other authorities, such as the Department of Education.

## 6 Parental engagement

Building positive relationships with all stakeholders is crucial to promoting good attendance and maintaining open and honest communication between parents/carers and the school/UTC is fundamental. Research indicates that effective parental engagement not only enhances attendance but is also linked to higher academic achievement, improved attitudes towards learning, and better behaviour among children and young people.

While it is the responsibility of parents/carers to report absences and provide reasons, communication between the school/UTC and families must be a reciprocal process. Studies have shown that utilising a variety of communication tools enhances the timeliness, efficiency, and productivity of interactions between parents/carers and the school/UTC.

Despite the establishment of effective engagement strategies, some parents/carers may remain difficult to reach. This group often requires more frequent contact from the school/UTC, as their reluctance to engage may stem from their own negative experiences with schooling, challenges in communication, such as low literacy levels, limited proficiency in English, or cultural differences.

Recognising the importance of proactive interaction, our Trust prioritises intervention through direct engagement. Academies will support parents/carers at all levels by:

- Increasing the frequency and depth of communication based on individual needs.
- Establishing and maintaining trust.
- Providing support to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Signposting to relevant support agencies.
- Conducting home visits.
- Allocating mentors.
- Arranging transportation in exceptional circumstances.
- Offering parenting support.

These efforts ensure that every family is supported in fostering regular attendance and achieving the best outcomes for their children.

## Guiding Principles

- Each school/UTC within the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (BFLPT) emphasises that improving attendance and punctuality is a shared responsibility across the entire school/UTC community.

- BFLPT is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have access to a full-time education that meets their individual needs, enabling them to realise their full potential.
- Each school/UTC will strive to provide a safe and nurturing environment where every pupil can fully engage with the opportunities offered.
- Schools/UTCs will work collaboratively with students/pupils and their families to ensure that every pupil maintains good attendance and punctuality.
- Schools/UTCs will actively challenge behaviours from students/pupils, and parents/carers that reflect a low priority on attendance and punctuality.
- Each school/UTC will maintain an effective system of communication with parents/carers and relevant agencies to facilitate the exchange of information and provide mutual support.
- Schools/UTCs will continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems to ensure the accuracy of attendance data and will employ appropriate tracking strategies to identify and address trends that may negatively impact attendance and learning.
- Each school/UTC will follow the trusts graduated response to support and deal with declining attendance. Please see appendix 2
- Each school/UTC will fully support the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and the Children Act 2003: *Every Child Matters* by consistently implementing this policy.
- In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, each school/UTC will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of all young people.

#### What you can expect from the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust:

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where a pupil's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support children and young people to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- We will support children and young people returning to school after prolonged absence.

#### What the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust expects from students/pupils

- To attend regularly and on time on those days that it is open, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.

#### What Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust expects from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends the school/UTC on those days it is open, dressed in full uniform, and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day the school/UTC is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from the school/UTC for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation (see below).



- To avoid arranging holidays during term time. The school/UTC cannot authorise holidays in term time and any absence will be unauthorised.
- To immediately inform the school/UTC Attendance Office if their child is unable to attend (by 8.00am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
- Parents/carers should contact the school/UTC on each day of absence.

## Registration

- The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session, the timings of when each register closes will be stipulated by each school/UTC.

## Expectations

- Students/Pupils are expected to arrive by 5 minutes prior to the school/UTC opening time in order to be ready for the start of tutor time/ first lesson.
- Students/Pupils are registered during tutor period/first lesson and afternoon session (Secondary: at the start of each lesson)
- Children and young people arriving after registers have closed, will be marked as unauthorised absence unless medical documentation (prescription etc.) has been provided or in exceptional circumstances.
  - **NB** Registers will close 30 minutes after the start of the school day.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1).
- Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in [‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024’](#)

## Punctuality

### Primary and Infant Expectations

- **Sign-In Procedure:** Any pupil arriving late must sign in at Reception or the School Office and provide a reason for their tardiness.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Instances of repeated lateness will be communicated to parents or carers. Continuous lateness after the official register has closed may be treated similarly to unauthorised absences.
- **Supportive Measures:** A graduated approach will be employed to address and improve attendance and punctuality, tailored to each child's attendance record.
- **Catch-Up Sessions:** To minimise the impact of missed learning time, schools may offer catch-up sessions, which could take place during breaks, lunch periods, or after school.

- **Early Years (EYFS):** For pupils in Early Years, meetings with parents will be scheduled to emphasise the importance of consistent attendance and to develop an attendance improvement plan.
- **Consequences for Persistent Lateness:** Repeated lateness will be reported to parents or carers. Persistent lateness after the register has closed may be addressed in the same manner as absences and should be recorded as a U code in the register. This may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice or potential prosecution in the Magistrates' Court and or referral to social services.

## Secondary Expectations

- **Sign-In Procedure:** Students arriving late must sign in at Reception and provide a reason for their lateness. Where applicable, the student's planner will be stamped, or a late slip will be issued.
- **Sanctions for Lateness:** Students who arrive late will face a sanction in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- **Notification of Detentions:** If a detention or catch-up session is assigned on the same day, parents or carers will be notified during the school day. If contact cannot be made, the student will receive late slip, and a text message will be sent parents informing them of the sanction.
- **Supportive measures:** A graduated approach will be implemented to enhance attendance based on each child's individual attendance record.
- **Verification at First Lesson:** Students arriving at their first lesson without a stamped planner or late slip must be directed back to Reception to sign in.
- **Consequences for Persistent Lateness:** Repeated lateness will be reported to parents or carers. Persistent lateness after the register has closed may be addressed in the same manner as absences and should be recorded as a U code in the register. ***This may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice or potential prosecution in the Magistrates' Court and or referral to social services.***

## Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

An authorised absence is defined as an instance where the School/UTC has granted prior approval for the absence or has accepted the explanation provided after the absence as a valid justification. It is important to note that only the School/UTC has the authority to authorise absences; parents or carers do not have this authority.

## Notification of Absence

Parents or carers are required to notify the school/UTC of their child's absence by contacting the School Reception (for Primary and Infant pupils) or the Attendance Office (for secondary students). This should be done by telephone or email on the morning of the absence,

preferably before the start of the school day. The reason for the absence and the expected date of return should be provided.

## Circumstances Under Which Absences Will Not Be Authorised

Absences will not be authorised for the following reasons:

- Caring for siblings or unwell parents/carers.
- Celebrating birthdays.
- Attending events such as the Yorkshire Show or similar outings.
- Engaging in shopping trips.
- Taking family holidays - (please note that family holidays during term time will not be approved).
- Attending special occasions where the school/UTC does not agree that the absence should be granted.

## Medical and Dental Appointments

Whenever possible, medical, dental, and other appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours. In cases where appointments necessitate time away from school, parents or carers should ensure that the student/pupil attends school before the appointment, signs out, and returns to school after the appointment. To have such absences authorised, parents or carers must provide confirmation of the appointment through an appointment card, letter, or electronic/text confirmation. If a student/pupil arrives late to the school/UTC due to a medical appointment at the start of the day, confirmation of the appointment must be provided; otherwise, a catch session may be issued (school/UTC dependent).

## Determination of Authorisation

Upon receiving an explanation from parents or carers regarding a student's/pupil's absence, the school/UTC will assess the explanation and determine whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

## Unauthorised Absences

Any absence that remains unexplained will be classified as unauthorised.

## Prohibition on Absence for Holidays and Events

Parents or carers are strongly advised against taking their children out of school for holidays, day trips, attendance at sporting events, or similar activities. Such absences will not be authorised by the school/UTC unless there are exceptional circumstances. This decision is based on the evidence we have about absenteeism and how it impacts negatively on students'/pupils' later performance in exams and ultimately the child's life chances.

## How we respond to Absence/Lateness

- In the event that a pupil is absent during morning registration and no prior explanation has been provided by a parent/carer, the school/UTC will initiate contact with the parents/carers. Our safeguarding responsibilities are paramount, and we are committed to reaching out to ensure parents/carers are informed of their child's absence. Contact will be made through an automated messaging system that sends text notifications to mobile numbers associated with parental responsibility. Parents/carers can respond to this text message with the reason for their child's absence. Additionally, parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school or UTC directly to report the reason for their child's absence. It is crucial for parents/carers to keep their contact details up-to-date with the school/UTC at all times.
- If there is no response to the automated message, the school/UTC may follow up with a telephone call or, in certain cases, a home visit to fulfil our legal obligation to ascertain the child's whereabouts. Unexplained absences may be pursued further through text messages, letters, or emails.
- A welfare check will be conducted for students/pupils who have not been physically present at the school/UTC for three consecutive days.
- If there is no contact with the school/UTC, we will contact the Early Help team and social services as part of our safeguarding duties.
- All absence records will be retained for a period of three years.
- When a pupil's absence raises concerns, the school/UTC will implement a structured procedure to address and improve attendance. This may involve contact and support through various means, including telephone calls, letters, in-school meetings, home visits, formal attendance monitoring, and collaboration with the Local Authority, which ultimately could result in a penalty notice being issued.
- Should there be no sustained improvement in attendance despite intervention efforts, legal action may be pursued in accordance with the relevant Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

## Persistent/ Severe Absence

A student/pupil is classified as a Persistent Absentee (PA) when they miss 10% or more of their schooling over the course of the academic year, regardless of the reason for their absence. Such a level of absenteeism significantly impacts a student's/pupil's educational outcomes, and it is imperative that parents/carers provide their full support and cooperation to address this issue. Prior to students/pupils becoming persistently absent the school/UTC will have followed the graduated intervention approach.

Students/Pupils whose attendance reaches or is at risk of reaching the Persistent absentee (PA) threshold will be prioritised for intervention. The intervention strategies may include:

- **Action Plan Development:** An action plan will be formulated to improve attendance, which may involve referrals to external agencies and meetings between relevant school/UTC staff and parents/carers.

- **Further Actions:** If parents/carers do not cooperate with the support and strategies provided by the school/UTC, additional advice may be sought, potentially leading to legal sanctions.

Persistent absenteeism data is reported to the relevant Local Authority through the school census on a termly and annual basis.

## Leave of Absence during Term Time

Any absence from school disrupts the continuity of a student's/pupil's learning. Government legislation stipulates that only exceptional circumstances justify an authorised leave of absence. For the most current guidance, please refer to the Department for Education.

Parents/carers are strongly advised against taking their children out of school for holidays during term time. All requests for leave of absence will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and are subject to the discretion of the Headteacher/Principal or Head of School of the individual school/UTC.

Requests for leave of absence must be submitted using the Request Form (or letter, as specified by the school/UTC) at least four weeks prior to the proposed absence. The request must include all relevant factors that need to be considered. The School/UTC reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who proceed with taking their children out of school without proper authorisation.

## Re-integration following Long-term Absence

In the event that a student/ pupil has been absent from the school/UTC for an extended period, such as due to illness, the school/UTC will undertake the following measures to support the student's/pupil's reintegration:

- **Welcoming the Student/Pupil:** The School/UTC will warmly welcome the student/pupil back and recognise the significance of their return.
- **Providing Support:** In collaboration with parents or carers, the school/UTC will offer support to facilitate a smooth and successful re-entry.
- **Informing Relevant Staff:** All relevant staff members will be informed of the student's/pupil's circumstances to ensure appropriate support and understanding.
- **Collaborating with Other Agencies:** Where necessary, the school/UTC will engage with external agencies to support the student's/pupil's reintegration and ensure a positive outcome.
- **Considering a Personalised Programme:** The school/UTC will evaluate the need for a personalised return-to-school program, if deemed appropriate.
- **Designating a Key Staff Member:** A designated key member of staff will be appointed to oversee and review the student's/pupil's return and progress.

These measures are intended to support the student/pupil effectively and to ensure a successful transition back into the school/UTC environment.

## Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

- We believe that children and young people are more likely to maintain regular attendance when the curriculum is engaging and tailored to their individual needs. The curriculum is reviewed and revised annually to ensure it meets the diverse abilities and requirements of all students.
- Students/Pupils are regularly informed of their attendance levels and provided with guidance on how to improve their attendance where appropriate.
- Good and improved attendance and punctuality are actively promoted and recognised. Note: Students/Pupils with medical issues or those whose attendance is affected by significant events will still be acknowledged within the school/UTC's praise and reward systems.
- The importance of good attendance is regularly communicated to children and young people, parents/carers, and staff.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to reach out to the school/UTC Attendance Team at any time to discuss their child's attendance.
- Regular meetings with appropriate staff members and external agencies may be conducted to identify and support students whose attendance is a concern.
- Students who have been absent for extended periods will receive appropriate support to facilitate their reintegration into the school/UTC.
- Effective communication and coordination with feeder schools are established to ensure a smooth transition to the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust.
- Attendance will be reported a minimum two times per year through the school/UTC reporting procedures.

## Attendance data and targets

- **Attend Target for Attendance:** The School/UTC aims for all children and young people to achieve 100% attendance. Full attendance is essential for students/pupils to reach their maximum potential and achieve academic success.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Attendance data will be systematically collected and analysed to inform and enhance the attendance policies and interventions of the schools and UTCs.
- **Monitoring and Early Intervention:** Individual pupil attendance data will be closely monitored to facilitate early intervention and address any issues promptly.
- **The School/UTC Local Governing Board will receive attendance data on a termly basis to maintain transparency and accountability. The trust will be provided with attendance data weekly so that support can be directed where appropriate.** Each school/UTC will report attendance to the trust so that this can be monitored, and support directed when appropriate.
- **Communication with the Local Authority:** Attendance and persistent absence data will be communicated to the Local Authority and made available through Analyse School Performance (ASP).

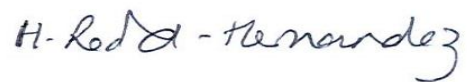
- **Weekly Monitoring:** Each school or UTC will monitor attendance on a weekly basis, ensuring ongoing oversight and management.

## Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

- Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child receives a suitable education.
- Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered is guilty of an offence.
- The School/UTC works together with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibilities. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision orders, or referrals to the Magistrates Court, which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison.
- All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absences.

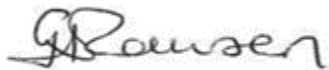
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Signed Co-CEO of BFLPT – Helen Redford-Hernandez:



Date: September 2024

Signed Co-CEO of BFLPT – Garath Rawson:



Date: September 2024

Signed – Chair of BFLPT – Pippa Dodgshon:



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## APPENDIX 1

Attendance codes can be found in Chapter 8 of DFE Guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024.

**[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working together to improve school attendance applies from 19 August 2024 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)**