

Bardwell School School Attendance Policy 2023-2024

part of the



Updated September 2023 to be reviewed September 2024

The policy must be reviewed and updated at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures

Date ratified	13th September 2022
Chair of Trustees	Chris Scrivener
Chair of LAB	Matthew Willis
Designated Manager for Gallery Trust	Alison Beasley
Designated Trustee for Improving Attendance	James Shryane

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Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact details
Head Teacher	Julie Foot	
Senior leader for attendance	Jade Levine	07984 095374 Jlev0231@bardwell.oxon.sch.uk
Attendance officer with responsibility for daily attendance	Lara Green	larag@bardwell.oxon.sch.uk
LAB chair	Matthew Willis	m.willis@thegallerytrust.co.uk
Designated Safeguarding manager for Gallery Trust	Alison Beasley	a.beasley@thegallerytrust.co.uk
Oxfordshire County Council Local Authority School Attendance Team		https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/county-attendance-team 01865 323513
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)		https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe/report-child-abuse 0345 050 7666

1. Aims

At Bardwell School, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Bardwell School expects good attendance from its students, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that this is achieved. We consider good attendance to be 95% or more at this school for any child that does not have an additional medical/health need. However individual needs are considered when monitoring attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE's [Working together to improve school attendance](#), Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities, September 2022, and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees (BOT), Local Academy Boards (LAB) and the Senior Executive Team (SET) for The Gallery Trust are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader for attendance is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Provide attendance data to the Senior executive team for The Gallery Trust
- Working with the Local Authority attendance team to tackle persistent absence
- Report concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher and the Senior Executive team when appropriate

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jade Levine and can be contacted via 07984 095374/jlev0231@bardwell.oxon.sch.uk

3.4 Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9:30am. on the same day

3.5 School admin/office staff will:

- Retrieve messages from the school attendance line

- Take calls from Parents/Carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from Parents/Carers to the Tutor/DSL/Head Teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Call Parents /Carers to follow up on daily non-attendance
- Ensure daily attendance data is recorded and available by 9:45am
- Alert Senior Team Leader and Head Teacher immediately if student's whereabouts are unknown (after calls home have been made)
- Alert Senior Team Leader and Head Teacher of any attendance concerns around individual students or alternative providers
- Follow up with alternative providers if a student's attendance has not been provided by the placement

3.6 Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with **more than one** emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.7 Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register.

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. In our school we use Integris

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

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

See [Appendix 1: attendance codes](#) for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between 9:00am and 9:15 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:30am and will be kept open until 9:40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15pm and will be kept open until 1:25pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's Parent/Carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence 9am, or as soon as practically possible by calling the school number on 01865 242182 or via Parent Mail (see also section 7).

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers 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 school 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.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's Parent/Carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Please send a copy of the appointment letter into school at least 72 hours ahead of the appointment, if you are unable to provide a letter a screen shot of the text message appointment reminder will also be suitable.

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/Carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- The school gates are closed at 9:15am, any students who arrive after this time will enter via reception and be marked as late.
- Teachers record student absences in the register. Where there is no known reason, they will mark the student absent and this will be followed up by the admin team / SLT and amended with the appropriate code.

Punctuality issues which arise from SEN Home to School transport will be noted, we will support parents in raising concerns with the OCC Transport Team.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's Parent/Carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the student's social worker
- 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/Carers on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Consider a home visit by school staff (this will take place if there are 3 continuous days of unexplained absence)
- If absence continues, the school will consider a referral to police or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- If there are more than 10 days unexplained absences, we will discuss with the Oxfordshire County Council Local Authority School Attendance Team.

4.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly parent meetings.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will only authorise a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence will be authorised at the

Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Parents or Carers must apply in advance for permission.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request, additional evidence may be requested to support the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- 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 school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

There are reasons why many of our students would not be able to attend full time such as medical conditions that disrupt attendance, hospital admissions, and have frequent medical appointments. Sometimes parents and carers may make decisions on behalf of their son or daughter that affect their attendance and in these cases, we take a multi-agency approach and work with parents and carers. For this reason, we do not celebrate 100% attendance as this would not be an inclusive approach.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored and followed up on a daily basis. Percentage figures are monitored on a fortnightly basis by Lara Green via an attendance tracker. This helps to clearly identify patterns in attendance ensuring support is sought from appropriate agencies.

A member of the of the admin team / SLT will note both authorised and unauthorised absences in the registers and this is followed up accordingly.

Any concerns that the school believes needs additional support to ensure students maintain excellent attendance, will be brought to the attention of the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team, who has the authority to issue penalty notices or fines.

<https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/county-attendance-team>

7.1 Monitoring attendance

At our school we will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual student level

- Identify whether or not there are individual pupils or particular groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence 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 compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Boards for the schools and the Trustees.

7.2 Analysing attendance

At our school we 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
- Provide regular attendance reports to our LAB, Trust Senior Executive Team and Trustees.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

At our school we will:

- Track attendance of each pupil to be able to identify declining attendance at an early stage.
- Provide regular attendance and reports to the Head Teacher 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.
- Work with the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team.

7.4 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 school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Contact parents to discuss attendance concerns
- Work with the pupil and family to try and identify the cause of the absence.
- Notify the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team of any students that have missed school for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised. This will be done on a monthly basis.
- Based on an assessment of individual cases we will also consider:
 - Home visits

- Meetings with the Parents or Carers of pupils who are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Working with the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team
- Referrals to Social care e.g. Early Help Assessment
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Any pattern of regular absentees will be identified, and support will be offered by the school, in finding solutions for raising attendance. Many problems such as bullying, or family difficulties can therefore be detected early, and support given to students and parents to address these issues swiftly.

7.5 Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall ensure they receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To their age, ability, and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to students who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school”

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning, which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates’ Court system.

A Parent/Carers can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six-week period.
- They allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school’s authorisation.
- They fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence.
- Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parents’ fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting may be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases may be discussed and referred to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

As a restorative school we will always do our best to work with families and pupils to address attendance concerns without the need for legal intervention, but parents and Carers must note that where all avenues of support have been facilitated by the school, local authorities, and other partners and persistent or severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues this may be the only available course of action.

8. Response to unexplained absence.

First Day Response

If a student is absent from school and we have **not** been informed, either by telephone, Parent Mail or letter, a phone call home will be made to establish the reasons for the absence. This will happen on the **first day of your child's absence from school**.

Please note that for students not living in the close vicinity of our school, if they have a medical/dental appointment, we do not expect them to take a full day off school.

If the parent cannot be contacted, the school will call other emergency contacts that have been provided to the school to try and establish the safety and whereabouts of the pupil.

A home visit may take place if there are concerns about the wellbeing of the pupil

All phone calls are made with the utmost consideration of the needs and feelings of the recipient and politeness is a primary factor.

A follow up email or letter will be sent requesting an explanation for the absence.

Third Day Response

For safeguarding reasons, we will make a home visit (this may have already been carried out previously). However, if we are unable to get a response then we will report it to the police as your child will then be classed a 'missing child'.

Pupil Missing From Education

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation after 5 consecutive school days and the school are unable to make contact with the family must be referred to the LCSS. LCSS will visit the home. If this is unsuccessful, then the police will visit the home. If the pupil cannot be located, a MP1 form must be completed and sent to the Students Missing Education Administrator

Ongoing considerations

On each day that a student is absent we will consider any additional vulnerabilities or concerns that we may have around the individual and make an assessment of risk. This may mean that actions are taken sooner, for example contact with police or social care on day one of absence where no explanation is provided.\

9. Equality Statement

We understand our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We understand the individual needs of our pupils, and we always take these into consideration when working with our pupils and families.

10 . Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by The Designated Safeguarding Manager for The Gallery Trust and the Head Teacher for our school. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trustees.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day