



**BRADFIELDS ACADEMY**

## **Attendance Policy**

**This policy will be reviewed on at least a three year basis and whenever significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place.**

**Where any changes, amendments or additions are made the version number will change.**

**Reviews that result in no changes at all will maintain the same version number.**

<b>Approved by the Principal:</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Approved by the Chair of Trustees</b>		<b>Date</b>
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	February 2022 Version 10	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	September 2022	

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## Contents

Introduction .....	10
Members of Staff with Responsibility for Attendance .....	10
Additional staff working in the field of attendance .....	10
Attendance Advisory Practitioner (SEAAS) .....	10
Statement of Intent .....	11
Responsibilities.....	12
Parental Responsibility.....	12
Staff Responsibilities.....	12
Form Tutors and Form TAs.....	12
Subject Staff .....	13
Office Staff.....	13
Vice Principals .....	13
Attendance Advisory Practitioner .....	14
Procedures .....	15
Authorising Absence .....	15
Lateness .....	15
Lateness to Registration .....	15
Lateness to Lessons.....	15
Holidays and Leave of Absence .....	16
Penalty Notices .....	16
Rewards .....	17
Looked After Children .....	17
Persistent Absence Form (PA Form) .....	17
Post 16 Bursary .....	17
Register Audit .....	17
Attendance Targets .....	18

## Introduction

This policy was initially written and adopted in May 2009.

The policy was reviewed and updated during February 2012. The review consisted of consultation with Leadership Team, Pastoral Staff, and the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (SEAAS Officer) from the Attendance Advisory Service.

A further review was taken in July 2013 following the removal of EMA and changes in guidance from the Secretary of State regarding holidays in term time.

Review 4 was undertaken in July 2014 for adoption in September 2014 to incorporate the academy's use of the electronic register and the inclusion of students at Bradfields@Strood Academy provision.

Review 5 occurred at the beginning of the 2015-2016 academic year due to a change in the Persistence Absence Guidelines and the extension of the electronic system to full Lesson Monitor.

Review 6 was undertaken in February 2017 to incorporate the use of 'Minutes Late' within Lesson Monitor, and the setting of Attendance Targets for all students.

Review 7 was undertaken in September 2018 following the decision to utilise an attendance officer. At the same time we have moved away from purchasing the attendance service from Medway Local Authority.

Review 8, undertaken in 2019 provided updates to certain key members of staff, and introduced the notion that registers needed to be closed 'by' a certain time rather than 'at' a certain time.

Review 9 undertaken in 2021 sought to bring the layout of the policy in line with a recognised 'house style', update changes to key members of staff and incorporate the changes made to 'attendance codes and sub-codes in response to the COVID.

Review 10 undertaken in February 2022 addressed some of the difficulties staff and the Attendance Officer were having in dealing with lessons occurring outside of the academy and those activities classed as visits (V). it also removed the term Associate Assistant Principals.

## Members of Staff with Responsibility for Attendance

Mr David Waters (Vice Principal (DSL))  
Mrs Elaine Morley – Attendance Officer

### Additional staff working in the field of attendance

Mrs Emma McGregor Davies (Parent Carer Partnership Manager)  
Mrs Elizabeth Halton (Vice Principal (DLACT))  
Ms Lesley Harris (Business Manager – Pupil Premium and Bursary)  
Engagement Support Leads (ESLs)  
Assistant Principals  
All Form Tutors

### Attendance Advisory Practitioner (SEAAS)

Miss Julie Gilham

## Statement of Intent

- Bradfields Academy is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all of the students. Regular attendance is crucial if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities available to them.
- One of the basic principles of Bradfields Academy is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. The academy promotes 100% attendance for all of the students, and a variety of rewards and strategies are used to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- The academy recognises that parents and carers have a vital role, and legal responsibility to ensure good attendance. The academy will work in partnership with parents and carers, students, and other agencies to ensure good attendance and resolve any attendance issues.
- All Learning Communities will hold attendance as a priority. The post-16 elements of the academy will use attendance information to make informed decisions about the payment of any Discretionary Bursaries that are applied for.
- The academy will in work in partnership with the DfE in monitoring the impact of the 2019 and beyond pandemic. To support this the academy will fully utilise the revised attendance codes and sub-codes in recording absence. These will be used in providing a daily or weekly return to the DfE as instructed.

## Responsibilities

### Parental Responsibility

The responsibility that students attend Bradfields regularly and punctually rests with parents and carers. It is, therefore, parents (or carers) that must be the first line of contact whenever the student is absent.

It is the parent or carers responsibility to contact the academy whenever the student is absent and this should be on the first day. Daily contact should be maintained until the student returns to the academy, unless it is a long term absence and an identified return date is given (i.e. if a doctor has signed a student off). The contact need only resume once this date has been reached and the absence is continuing.

The academy recognises the fact that this contact from parents/carers will not always happen and so will phone home if a student is absent and the academy has not been informed. This initial contact from the academy is part of the Safeguarding procedures to ensure that students have not gone missing on the way to Bradfields.

### Staff Responsibilities

#### Form Tutors and Form TAs

Form Tutors (and TA's in their absence) will ensure that an academy register is taken during each registration period. These are completed at the beginning of the morning and the end of the afternoon session. Staff will complete the registers electronically through the SIMS system. A detailed guide of how to do this is included in Appendix 1.

The morning and afternoon sessions are legal requirements, and as such must be completed by a responsible adult. Students **must not** be given the responsibility for marking the am and pm registers.

Staff will be able to see the DFE codes that are currently used to complete registers, they will, however, only be able to use a limited number of these when completing the register. Any additional codes that are needed will be entered by the Office Staff. For example a mark of E indicating an exclusion can only be entered by the Office following an exclusion being determined by the Principal and a letter being sent. Staff are able to add a note to a register if they are aware of a lateness or the whereabouts of a student but are unsure of the correct code. This can then be completed by the Attendance Officer.

#### **All students must receive a mark each time the register is called.**

If a student is absent and the reason is not yet known then an **N** is entered. When a reason is provided then the N **MUST** be updated. All N's must to be resolved within 10 working days. Updates can be carried out by the tutorial staff on receipt of a note (this may be through email, TEAMS, SeeSaw or the planner); or by the Office Staff following telephone or text confirmation. Tutor Staff CAN overwrite an N mark to a present mark or add a note.

Form tutors will encourage, and remind students to bring in notes to support absence, if they remain unauthorised.

Form tutors should also be vigilant for patterns of absence, and concerns should be reported to the Vice Principal.

If a student is referred to the Attendance Advisory Service the tutorial staff will be required to collect medical evidence from the student or the parents and carers to

support any absence. This will be forwarded to the Attendance Officer who will collate these to pass to the SEAAS Officer.

### Subject Staff

A class register will be taken during each lesson. Staff with concerns about an individual's attendance at their lessons should report this to their Subject Leader who will liaise with the Assistant Principals. Registers must be completed through the Lesson Monitor module on the SIMS system. The register can be completed by the class teacher, TA or any other responsible adult within the room. N and L marks should have a note attached where the reason is known to enable the Attendance officer to update the code.

Students may be given the responsibility of marking the lesson attendance.

If, as part of their normal lesson, students are off site with their normal class teacher and are following their normal timetable, for example they are travel training, community volunteering, using an off-site PE facility then they should be marked present and absent in the normal way. This is not classed as a visit. A passenger log sheet must be left at reception.

If students are being taken out of the academy and not following their normal timetable, then this is classed as a Visit and should be marked V. Again a passenger log sheet must be left with reception.

### Office Staff

It will be usual that staff in the Academy Office will be the first to know of the reason for a student's absence. They will inform the Attendance Officer when reasons are known. The Attendance Officer will update the electronic registration system. If the absence is ongoing then a note will be placed on the electronic system covering the period of absence.

Academy Office staff will ensure that the SIMS system is up to date and will report any concerns they have to the Vice Principal. If a student is removed from the Academy Roll and a destination is not known the academy must ensure the SEAAS Officer and the Local Authority is informed via an Student Missing Education Form.

The Attendance Officer will assist the Vice Principal and Office Manager with any official returns that are required by the Local Authority or the DFE.

The Vice Principals and the Business Manager will administer and oversee the Post 16 Bursary Scheme.

The Attendance Officer will organise the collection of any medical evidence for any student referred to the Attendance Advisory Service.

### Vice Principals

The Vice Principal has over-all responsibility for the academy's attendance. They will monitor tutors and the office staff in their responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of the Vice Principal along with the Parent Carer Partnership Manager to liaise with the SEAAS Officer and ensure they are kept up to date with the academy's position regarding attendance. It is also their role to make any referrals to the SEAAS Officer if there are students with patterns of absence or a concern over unauthorised absence.

It is the role of the academy to authorise absence and not that of the parent/carer. In many cases this can be delegated to Tutors and Office Staff if there is any doubt or difficulty over authorising an absence it should be referred to the Vice Principal.

The Vice Principal should over see any official returns required in the field of attendance and prepare the information required for the SEAAS Officer to carry out an official register check each year.

The Vice Principals will liaise over any decisions around PP and Post 16 Bursary payments that may be influenced by attendance.

#### [Attendance Advisory Practitioner](#)

The SEAAS Officer will liaise with the Vice Principal over attendance issues and follow up any referrals made. They will visit the academy every week to review and update.

The SEAAS Officer will attend In School Reviews/Student Reviews wherever possible/relevant.

## Procedures

It is expected that parents/carers will contact the academy if a student is going to be absent and provide a suitable explanation. If this does not happen then the Attendance Officer will contact home, before 10:00, to find the reason. If there are concerns at this stage then they are to be reported on to the SEAS Officer and the Vice Principal.

Form Tutors or their Teaching Assistants in their absence, will complete a register twice daily. The morning session starts at 08:40 and the register closes at 09:10; the afternoon session at 15:10 and the register closes at 15:20. Students are expected to be in registration at this time and will receive a late mark if the register has been completed and closed before they arrive. Students who are persistently late will be referred to the SEAS Officer.

### Authorising Absence

It is the role of the academy to decide whether an absence is authorised, not the role of the parent/carer. This will normally be the role of the Form Tutor or the Attendance Officer on receipt of a reason. Once the absence is authorised then the Attendance Officer will insert the correct code on the electronic system. If the absence is unauthorised for three days then it should be highlighted to the Vice Principal. If the absence cannot be resolved it should be brought to the attention of the SEAS Officer.

### Lateness

#### Lateness to Registration

If a student arrives before 09:10 then they should go to their registration room and receive a present mark. If the student arrives after 09:10 when the registers close they will need to sign in at reception in the Late Book. The Attendance Officer will then complete the electronic register, recording the Late Mark, reason, and the Minutes Late section. These students must then be a priority in the Attendance Officer's daily check to ensure that changes have been made and the student is not marked as absent.

On days where there is an assembly, the SLT, ESL or their nominated representative will construct a list of all students who enter the assembly hall after the assembly has begun. This list is to be sent to the Attendance Officer who will ensure that the students are marked in. If students arrive after 09:10 on an assembly day then the usual late procedures will apply.

Persistent lateness should be reported to the Vice Principal and then the SEAS Officer.

As the majority of Bradfields' students rely on transport to bring them in, professional judgement needs to be exercised with lateness. Students should only receive a late mark if they are individually involved in their lateness. For example a student who oversleeps and is late should receive a late mark, whereas students who are on a bus that breaks down and all the students are delayed should not be penalised by this.

#### Lateness to Lessons

If a student is late to lesson then an L mark is given and the Minutes Late section is completed. If staff are recording Minutes Late of more than 10 minutes then a reason must be given. If the time late is under 10 minutes staff can also record the reason.

## Holidays and Leave of Absence

Following amendments to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, and the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007:

***'Schools and Academies may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'.***

### **The entitlement to take a holiday in term time has been removed.**

If it is necessary for a student to take time off, this request must be made in writing, highlighting all the details. The Vice Principal will discuss with SLT colleagues where necessary, and make a decision on all requests. All requests will be considered on their individual merits. The following facts will be taken into account:

- Reason for the absence request,
- Attendance for the current academic year,
- Attendance in the previous academic year,
- Academic progress made and the capacity to catch up missed work.
- If the request is for a holiday then the following will be considered:
  - Students SEN and how this might impact
  - Availability of additional necessary support
  - Source of the holiday i.e. was it gifted by a charity?

Applications for leave will be answered in writing.

Leave taken without the academy's permission, or failure to return on the agreed date, will mean that the absence will be unauthorised (truancy). The deliberate taking of leave in term time without or against permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission was not given) will result in the parent/carer being liable to a fixed penalty notice. These Penalty Notices are applied to each parent/carer accompanying the student and require the recipient to pay a fine, currently £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of these fines will result in application to the Magistrates Court.

If a student fails to return within ten academy days of the agreed return date, and there is not good reason for this absence, the academy, in discussion with the Attendance Advisory Service, may remove the student's name from the Academy Roll.

If a request for leave of absence is received through the Student Planners then this must be forwarded to the Vice principal for consideration. Staff acknowledging a note of this nature must say that this is the case. Staff must avoid writing a comment that suggests permission has been granted.

Example: "Thank you for this detail which has now been passed to the Vice Principal for consideration" would be acceptable.

"Oh how lovely – have a wonderful time" would not be acceptable as it implies that permission has been given.

## Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated Local Authority Officers, Head teachers, and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of

unauthorised absences from school/academy. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

From 2005 Medway Council issued Penalty Notices. From September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 they will consider issuing fixed penalty notices for the following circumstances:

- a) Overt truancy (including students caught in truancy sweeps)
- b) Parentally condoned absences
- c) Taking unauthorised leave
- d) Delayed return from leave without school/academy agreement
- e) Persistent late arrival at school/academy.

## **Rewards**

Students who achieve good attendance will be recognised. Each term students who achieve over 95% will receive a certificate. In Term 6 certificates for those students achieving over 95% for the whole year will also be issued.

Names of high achievers will be published in the Academy Newsletters.

## **Looked After Children**

Each term the percentage attendance for each Looked After Child will be returned to their home Authority.

Most Local Authorities carry out a daily check on attendance of their CLA students through an email or telephone procedure.

## **Persistent Absence Form (PA Form)**

Each term the academy is required to return the Persistent Absence form. This is downloaded from the Schools' Forum website and returned to the PLASC team. Students who have an attendance of below 90% for the academic year should be recorded on the form along with their reasons for absence.

The form is then discussed with the SEAAS Officer at the next meeting, and actions decided.

## **Post 16 Bursary**

This is dealt with under a separate policy document in full.

Discretionary Bursary monies are used to provide Independent Carers Advice and Guidance to all sixth form students.

Should an application for an individual discretionary bursary be made, it would be considered against many factors including attendance. The Vice Principal (DSL), Vice Principal (DLACT) and the Business Manager would meet to decide upon the application.

## **Register Audit**

The Attendance Advisory Service will carry out an annual inspection of the academy's register. They will check the use of codings, any codes that have been changed, and students that have been removed from the academy roll.

The academy will prepare the relevant information before the inspection and the SEAAS Officer will provide written feedback along with action points after the process.

## **Attendance Targets**

All students have an automatically generated attendance target for the term. This is based on the previous attendance of that student. It is generated through a SIMS mark sheet and students are highlighted if they are on-track, making better than expected progress, or if they need support in achieving this target.