



**KING EDWARD VI  
FOUNDATION  
BIRMINGHAM**

*Educational excellence for our City*



**KING EDWARD VI  
ACADEMY TRUST  
BIRMINGHAM**

## Attendance Policy

<b>Responsible Board/Committee</b>	Academy Trust and Foundation Board
<b>Policy Type</b>	Hybrid Policy
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Education
<b>Statutory</b>	Yes
<b>Publish Online</b>	Yes
<b>Last Review Date</b>	July 2025
<b>Review Cycle</b>	Annual  This policy will not expire but will be reviewed as per its designated cycle. This policy remains effective whilst the review is taking place and will only become non-applicable once the updated version has been approved.
<b>Next Review Date</b>	July 2026
<b>Version</b>	2

<b>School</b>	King Edward VI Northfield School for Girls'
<b>School Policy Owner</b>	Lisa Colvin-Grieve
<b>SGB Approval Date</b>	

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# **1 Purpose**

## **Aim of this policy**

- 1.1 To support excellent levels of attendance for all students to enable the fulfilment of their potential at KEVI Northfield School for Girls’.
- 1.2 This policy has been prepared in accordance with the School’s statutory duties relating to attendance, including those outlined in the Department for Education’s statutory guidance, entitled Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024), which is referred to in this policy as the “DfE Attendance Guidance”.
- 1.3 The Schools of King Edward VI Birmingham will also comply with the Birmingham City Council and Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance on Elective Home Education (EHE) and involve services such as the Birmingham Special Educational Needs Assessment & Review Service (SENAR); Birmingham Children’s Trust; Birmingham Education Safeguarding Team, and Birmingham Education Legal Intervention Team.

## **Key Principles**

- 1.4 High levels of attendance and punctuality are promoted and rewarded.
- 1.5 It is the responsibility of everybody in the School to improve attendance and punctuality.
- 1.6 Where attendance or punctuality falls short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this, and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- 1.7 Whilst every pupil has the right to a full-time education, high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils. The School considers the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. The policy should be applied fairly and consistently, but in doing so, we always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families, who may have specific barriers to attendance. Some students find it harder than others to attend School. The School will work with students, parents/carers and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- 1.8 In the development and implementation of the policy, we recognise our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and consider the provisions under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We seek to work in partnership with pupils and parents/carers to remove barriers to attendance. The Equality Act 2010 states that it is unlawful to discriminate against people because of the protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage & civil partnership; pregnancy & maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.
- 1.9 In implementing this policy, the School is mindful of both conscious and unconscious bias. This means in dealing with attendance, the School will:
  - Take the time to consider decisions, listening to and considering the issues that are raised.
  - Justify and document decisions, including the reasoning behind them.
  - Ensure clear guidance is provided on reporting concerns related to prejudice.

- Promote positive behaviours.
- Encourage engagement from a wide range of pupils, parents/carers, and interested parties.

1.10 Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents/carers or students have should be discussed with their form tutor. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents/carers and students should contact their Head of Year or a member of the pastoral team.

## **2 Roles and responsibilities**

### **2.1 The School**

Good attendance starts with close and productive relationships with parents/carers and pupils. The School treats pupils and parents/carers with dignity and adopts a positive approach to attendance, recognising that this helps to challenge parents/carers' misconceptions about what constitutes good attendance.

#### **2.1.1 The School will:**

- Develop and maintain a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance, including:
  - (i) Students will take part in a weekly Attendance Form Time session. In these sessions, students will monitor their own attendance and punctuality and will record their attendance in their planners, so for them and parents and carers to review.
  - (ii) Year group and whole school attendance will also be a feature of all weekly assemblies.
  - (iii) Excellent/improved attendance will be acknowledged by:
    1. References during form time programmes;
    2. letters to parents;
    3. Termly certificates;
    4. references in school newsletters/bulletins;
    5. class charts positive points
    6. regular features/presentations on an attendance notice board;
    7. presentations at assemblies, parents' evenings, etc;
    8. personal congratulations from senior staff.
  - (iv) School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance is a cause for concern, these privileges may be taken away •
  - (v) There will be use of attendance contracts and regular meetings with parents/ carers to review progress for those requiring support to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Work with students and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance.

- Investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate.
- Take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Share information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with regulations<sup>1</sup> and the DfE Attendance Guidance, and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area, and other partners, including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation, and guidance.
- Regularly monitor, review, and analyse attendance and absence data, including identifying pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and setting targets for the future.
- Ensure that all students can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where there is evidence to suggest that this is not the case.
- Ensure that governors and the School's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy.
- Ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the DfE Attendance Guidance.
- Have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (please refer to our Child Protection Policy – [add hyperlink to child protection policy]).
- Provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education.
- Regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- Support students who are returning to education following long-term absence.
- Ensure that effective systems are in place to record and report attendance data, including the accurate completion of admission and attendance registers, utilising an electronic management information system.
- Assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the School to a designated senior leader, known as the Senior Attendance Champion.

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<sup>1</sup> [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

- Observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](#)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

## 2.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- Ensure that their child arrives at the School on time, wearing the correct uniform, and with the necessary equipment.
- Promote the importance of regular attendance at home.
- Follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the School (see section 3.9 below).
- Avoid unnecessary absences.
- Keep the School informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- Not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 3.11 below).

Inform the School in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parents/carers with whom the child shall live.

- Observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](#)).

## 2.3 Students

We expect students to:

- Attend the School regularly and on time.
- Be punctual for all lessons.
- Follow the correct procedure if they arrive at the School late (see *Registrations* and *Late Arrival* sections below).

## 2.4 Senior Attendance Champion

2.4.1 The Senior Attendance Champion ("SAC") at the School is Marie Campbell Associate Assistant Headteacher and SENCo.

2.4.2 The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the School and will:

- Set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.

- Establish and maintain effective systems for addressing absence, ensuring that all staff consistently follow these procedures.
- Evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes.
- Have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the School.
- Ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents/carers and students.
- Provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

## 2.5 **The board of trustees / the board of governors**

The board of trustees/governors will:

- Take an active role in improving attendance, recognise the importance of school attendance, and promote it across the trust, aligning with the School's ethos and policies.
- Ensure the School's leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends, and help School leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure School staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its academies.
- Hold termly attendance review meetings with the School.
- Require the School to report to the trustees on the School's attendance at regular intervals.
- Have a dedicated attendance lead who will drive improvement across the trust and act as a central point for schools with attendance queries.

## 3 **Procedures**

### **Registration**

- 3.1 The School maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each student's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Registration session	Start time	End time
Morning	[8.45am]	[9.15am]
Afternoon	[2.10pm]	[2.15pm]

- 3.2 Students who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where students arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out in *Late Arrival* section applies.
- 3.3 The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes, which can be found in the DfE Attendance Guidance.
- 3.4 Where a students attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter, in accordance with the behaviour policy, and engage parents/carers where necessary.

### **Late arrival**

- 3.5 If a students arrives at School after the relevant registration period has ended but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to the School office (main reception) to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness, to enable the School to establish the appropriate attendance or absence code. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- 3.6 Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be addressed in accordance with the behaviour policy.

### **Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation**

- 3.7 **Authorised absence** – absence will only be authorised where the School has given approval in advance for a student to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the School can authorise an absence.
- 3.8 **Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where the School is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.
- 3.9 **Reporting absence from the School**
- i. Where a student is to be absent from the School without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the School by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the School know when they expect the student to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the School on each day of absence.
  - ii. On the day of return to the School, parents/carers must also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence. Absence notes received from parents, or details from phone calls will be recorded on the Arbor system and scanned where required. This information will be referred to when



there are attendance concerns about a student. The Attendance Officer will send a letter home requesting an absence note or an explanation for absence when a student returns to school and no explanation has been received or note provided. If no explanation is provided by parents for an absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

- iii. Any unexplained absence will be followed up by the School promptly
  - a. A phone call, email or text message will be made to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
  - b. The school will always follow up any absences in order to: ascertain the reason for the absence, ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken, identify whether the absence is authorised or not, to identify the correct code to enter the data onto the School Census System
  - c. If a student remains absent and there has been no contact from parents/carers then a referral will be made by the Attendance Officer/ SLT Attendance Lead to the school's Educational Welfare Officer who will visit the home address to ascertain the reason for the student's absence and if still unable to make contact, decide whether to make a referral to outside agencies. If this falls on a day when the EWO is not in school a member of the pastoral safeguarding team will conduct the home visit.
  - d. If a reason for absence cannot be established after 5 working days, the code will be changed to "O": Absent without Authorisation.
  - e. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents and carers to speak to the Attendance Staff/Attendance Lead /Head of Year or a member of the pastoral or safeguarding team, as appropriate.
- iv. In cases where the School requires clarification to accurately record an absence in the attendance register, parents/carers may be asked to provide the School with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor, to support an absence due to illness. If satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

### **3.10 Appointments**

- v. Medical, dental, and other essential appointments for a student should take place outside of school hours, where this is reasonably possible.
- vi. Where an appointment must take place during school time, the student should attend the School for as much of the day as possible, and as much prior notice as possible should be given to their Head of Year who will inform the attendance team.

### **3.11 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)**

- vii. The School will grant permission for a student to be absent from School in the circumstances described in paragraph 37 of the DfE Attendance Guidance, which can be summarised as follows:
  - Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad.

- Attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting or future employment.
  - Study leave for public examinations.
  - Temporary, time-limited part-time timetable.
  - Other exceptional circumstances.
- viii. Parents/carers should make every effort to avoid taking students out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.
- ix. To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Headteacher and, wherever possible, at least 6 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- x. Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Headteacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
- Will be confirmed in writing.
  - Is solely at the Headteacher's discretion.
  - Is final.
- xi. Where permission is granted, the Headteacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- xii. If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the School, the absence will be marked as unauthorised, and parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see *Addressing poor attendance and punctuality* section below).

### 3.12 Religious observances

- xiii. We recognise that students of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Absence from the School will be authorised where a day of religious observance:
- Falls during school time.
  - Has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs.
- xiv. We ask that parents/carers notify the School by writing to the Headteacher in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

### 3.13 Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- xv. There may be circumstances in which students cannot attend School due to COVID-19. The School will adhere to any current guidance issued by the

Department for Education relating to the recording of attendance in relation to COVID-19.

- xvi. If a student tests positive for coronavirus, their absence will be recorded as illness.

### **Addressing poor attendance and punctuality**

3.14 The School recognises that poor attendance is habitual, and therefore, early identification, intervention, and prevention are crucial. The School regularly analyses data to both identify and provide immediate support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it. The School will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the students or groups of students who need it most. In doing so, the School, led by the SAC, will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders.
- Identify students who need targeted support from wider partners to pupils it has identified whose absence may be cause for concern (especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or server absence) as soon as possible and deliver this support in a timely manner.
- Conduct a thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Benchmark School attendance data at each level against local, regional, and national levels.
- Monitor the impact of School strategies and actions on improving attendance for specific pupils and groups.
- Work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups requiring support.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of students who the School and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable.

3.15 Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found here: 3.9 iii

3.16 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example, because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence;
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival;
- persistent truancy or lateness;

We will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality and ensure we:

- i) Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
    - (a) Discuss attendance and engagement at school
    - (b) Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
    - (c) Explain the help that is available
    - (d) Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
    - (e) Review any existing actions or interventions
  - ii) Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
  - iii) Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, our school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
  - iv) Implement sanctions, where necessary.
- 3.17 In cases where the School has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the student, a home welfare check may be carried out.
- 3.18 Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- 3.19 Absence will be classed as 'persistent' where it falls below 90% across the academic year and 'severe' when a pupil is absent from School for 50% or more of their possible sessions. Absence at this level is likely to significantly hinder educational prospects, and we expect full parental cooperation and support to urgently address these cases. As absence is often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, the School seeks to work with local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful or not engaged with, the law protects a pupil's right to education, with a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts. Intervention steps may include implementing an attendance action plan, referring to other agencies, and/or establishing an attendance contract.
- 3.20 The School follows the Birmingham City Council (BCC) Fast-Track approach to attendance. The School uses the national threshold for considering when a penalty notice is appropriate and will refer to the BCC Education Legal Intervention (ELIT) team as appropriate.
- 3.21 Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the School, and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£80 if paid within 21 days; £160 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents/carers, which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution.
- 3.22 When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- The National Framework for penalty notices as set out in paragraphs 176–202 of the DfE Attendance Guidance.
  - The local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices.
- 3.23 If a penalty notice is issued but not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed with prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents/carers if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend School regularly.

#### **4. Legislation and guidance**

- 4.1 This policy is based on Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".