BELMONT SCHOOL
(Additionally Resourced Mainstream School)

Attendance Policy
SEPTEMBER 2023

UNCRC Article 19 - **Every child has the right to protection** **Global Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-being** **Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages** **Global Goal 10 - Reduced Inequalities** **Reduce inequality within and among countries.**	
Head Teacher	
Name	Mrs P Aggarwall
Chair of Governors	
Name	Mr M Kara
Date Ratified	
Review Date	July 2024

Contents

1. Aims

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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), 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 governing board

The governing board is 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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Attendance is monitored and regularly reviewed and reported to Governors. See section 7 for further information.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher 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 responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance are the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, and they can be contacted via 02084270903 or via email, office@belmont.harrow.sch.uk.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher/Deputy Headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed penalty notices

The attendance officer can be contacted via ia 02084270903 or via email, office@belmont.harrow.sch.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, ensuring that they are marking children present and non-present. Further coding is completed by the attendance officer.

3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Where necessary persistent absences are recorded on CPOMS following school policy.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call or email the school to report their child's absence by 8am 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 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

3.8 Pupils

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.

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 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 by 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15amThe register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

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 at 8am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 6).

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/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with 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/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should request leaves of absence by completing the online exceptional leave form, https://www.belmont.harrow.sch.uk/exceptional-leave-during-term-time

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. 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:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

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/carer 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 will contact the local authority and police where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The DfE expects schools to report attendance regularly to parents and named carers. This information will be available through our new parent portal and report via termly parent meetings and progress reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 1 month before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via https://www.belmont.harrow.sch.uk/exceptional-leave-during-term-time. The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (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.
- Other valid reasons for authorized absence can be found in the School Attendance Guidance School attendance guidance May 2022 (publishing.service.gov.uk).

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices will be issued by the local authority, when requested by the Headteacher.

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

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
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If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority will proceed to prosecution.

Information regarding penalty notices can be found on Harrow Council's website Education Penalty Notices – Harrow Council

6. Strategies for promoting attendance
Promoting regular Attendance at Belmont School

This is everyone's responsibility; all members of staff, parent/carers and pupils. To help us all focus on this, Belmont School will ensure:

- Appropriate interventions are in place to improve punctuality.
- An appropriate curriculum is provided and will be reviewed regularly.
- The need for high quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.
- Pupils are provided with appropriate support to minimise absence from school. This includes Belmont School and multi-agency provision, as appropriate.
- Special Educational Needs, disadvantaged and Looked After pupils and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously.
- Effective partnerships with parent/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.
- Parents/carers are kept informed of pupils' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.
- Good attendance and punctuality is recognised and is celebrated in termly reports.
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with pupils in class and at assemblies.
- Staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff should ensure these are followed.

Attendance Expectations and Absence Procedures

A child not attending school is considered to be a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is required.

I.   Expectations of Parent/Carer
Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444   of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

- Ensure your child arrives for school on time:
- Telephone school if your child is to be late.

- For routine non-emergency medical and dental appointments please ensure they are made outside of school hours. Attending a medical appointment is still classed as an absence from school and it will affect your child's attendance percentage. If your child has to attend a medical/dental appointment within the school day please send your appointment letter or card to us via the office@belmont.harrow.sch.uk, without this evidence the absence will be unauthorised.
- Contact school preferably by 8:00am for each day of absence if your child is unable to attend through illness, giving an indication of the expected duration and return date to school (via School Website, telephone, email to office@belmont.harrow.sch.uk.
- If a ping message/email/phone call is received, because of your child's absence, it is important that you respond to this ping/email/phone call to ensure your child is appropriately safeguarded.
- Contact the Office Team by phoning the main school and selecting the Absence Reporting Line, if the reason for absence requires a more personal. If we are unable to answer, please leave a message and if required we will call you back.
- In case of emergency we need a minimum of two up to date contact numbers at all times so please ensure you inform us of any changes especially to mobile telephone numbers. (As a school we request a minimum of two emergency contact details be provided so that if the first contact cannot be reached we have a further contact point.). If we find a contact number to be out of use or discontinued we will contact you via email or letter to update our records, in the case of emergency, where no parental contact can be obtained, we may have to contact Social Care of the Police for support.
- Requests for exceptional circumstances leave of absence must be completed online (https://www.belmont.harrow.sch.uk/exceptional-leave-during-term-time) and can only be authorised by the Headteacher. Please note, no term time holidays will be authorised. The request will be maintained on file.

II.   If a pupil is absent we will
- Telephone and ping parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 9.15am.
- We will initially contact the primary contact recorded for the child and then call or text subsequent contacts for an explanation of absence.
- If no response is received for the unauthorised absence when school make contact, a member of school staff will call the second recorded contact on our schools' systems. If there are any safeguarding concerns on record, contact will be made with the family as soon as possible.
- If a pupil's absence rate falls below 97% parents/carers will be informed by letter. The table below explains the contact points we will have with parents/carers:

Letter One	Sent to parents whose children have attendance below 97%
Letter Two	Sent to parents whose children have attendance below 95%
Letter Three	Sent to parents whose children have attendance below 92%
Letter Four	Sent to children whose children have attendance below 90%

- If a pupil's absences are increasing and we are not aware of a good reason the parent/carer will be invited, via letter, to meet a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If absences persist the Safeguarding Team will refer the matter to Harrow Children's Services.

Understanding types of Absence

Belmont School has a statutory duty to record every absence that a pupil takes from school and this is why it is important that parents/carers advise school about the cause of any absence, preferably by email or phone on the first day and every subsequent day of absence.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

The Law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in truly exceptional circumstances. Headteachers cannot grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The School expects family holidays to be taken out of school term times. All such absences in term time are deemed as 'Unauthorised Absences'.

Requests for term time leave for family matters and holidays must be made prior to making any travel and accommodation bookings. Parents/carers must complete a request form, available from the school office. The school will then decide on each case. As stated above, holidays during term time will not be authorise

This type of absence may lead to the use of Penalty Notices or other sanctions from the Local Authority. From September 2018 Belmont School has been able to issue warning letters (in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) to parents where their child has accrued 10 sessions (equals five days) of unauthorised absence in any one term. The warning period will cover a period of 20 consecutive school days. If the child has any unauthorised absence, during this warning period of 20 days, the school will refer the case to the local authority requesting a Penalty Notice be issued.

Persistent Absence

- Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.

- Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.
- Parent/Carers are asked to contact the Office Team in the first instance.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and late arriving pupils disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the pupil arriving late and can encourage future absence. Our school day starts from 8:30am, teachers have activities and lessons ready for your child from this point in the day.

Minutes Late Per Day	How Many School Days/Weeks Missed In 1 Year
5 minutes late	3.4 school days missed a year
10 minutes late	1.4 school weeks missed a year
15 minutes late	2.6 school weeks missed a year
20 minutes late	2.8 school weeks missed a year
30 minutes late	4 school weeks missed a year

How we manage lateness -Process for Belmont School

The school day starts and registers are taken as soon as the children are in the class by the class teacher and pupils receive a late mark if they are not in their class by that time. School recommends that pupils arrive at their allocated time, **learning starts at this time.**

- If a pupil arrives late to school parents/carers will receive a ping message to inform them of their child's late arrival.
- Late arrival to school following the close of registers at 9:00am, is classified as an absence though the child will obtain a health and safety present on site mark. If a pupil is persistently late after the official close of the register, the school may request the local authority issue a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.

If a Parent/Carer has any problem getting their child to attend school on time they should contact the Senior Leadership Team who will offer support to resolve the problem.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is reviewed daily and weekly by the attendance officer. This data is shared with SLT, who review this fortnightly to agree action plans as required. Individual data is shared with the local authority and with other agencies as and when needed.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.

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

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term 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 governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school 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.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance.

The school will:

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

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.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

AIM - Attendance Intervention Model for irregular attendance

Phase	School Actions		LA Children's Services	LA Education Services
Phase 1 Week 1-3 minimum	First day response – log of texts / calls 1st School Warning letter including offer of support if difficulty 2nd School Warning letter, offering opportunity to discuss in school if required Home visit – if school based worker			
Phase 2 Week 4 -5	Meeting / School Attendance Panel with parents Consider options: 1. Consider PSP / Parenting Contract 2. Complete CAF with parental agreement for Early Support or referral to other services 3. Refer to LA School Attendance Liaison (SAL) Officer 4. Consider issuing an Education Penalty Notice 5. Refer to Pre Court Panel (if complex / long standing) If parents do not attend meeting, consider options 3 – 5		2.MASH team receive CAF & consider for Early Support, worker allocated;	3.SAL officer contacts family, agree support plan / identify options / support; Up to 6 weeks intervention, no progress, refer to school to follow options 3-5
Phase 3 Week 5-8	**4. Education Penalty Notice** Send Penalty Warning letter & specify monitoring period	**5. Pre Court Panel** Send School Warning letter re possible referral to LA pre court panel & specify monitoring period		
Phase 4 Wk 9-12	If no progress & further unauthorised absences, send Request to LA to issue EPN	If no progress & further unauthorised absences, send Chronology for Pre Court Panel to LA		LA determines to issue EPN / arrange PCP
Phase 5 Wk13-16	EPN payment period	Attend Pre Court Panel meeting with LA		EPN issued or PCP meeting arranged
Phase 6 Wk 17+	If unpaid, LA may withdraw EPN Complete witness statement if required and if parent pleads not guilty, may need to attend court.	If no progress or engagement at PCP, LA to pursue court action		Monitor EPN payment, review PCP and actions, refer to legal if court action, attend court as lead

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed if guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as and when needed. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour for Success policy
- Home and School Agreement

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