

Whole School Attendance Policy

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Responsible for Initiating Review of Policy	Assistant Head Pastoral and Boarding
Committee to Review	Welfare and Boarding Committee
Last Review Date	November 2025
Review Period	Annual
Approved by (Committee and Date)	
Approved by Board of Governors	Welfare and Boarding Committee November 2025
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Next Review Date	November 2026
Related Policies	7a Safeguarding Policy 9a Behaviour Policy – Whole School 9c Behaviour Overarching Statement – Whole School

Burgess Hill Girls aims to work together with parents, the Local Authority, and external agencies to ensure that all children registered at our school attend every day and on time unless absence is unavoidable e.g. chronic medical health issues, exceptional circumstances.

The registration of pupils is the best way to ensure their safety during the day. For these reasons, we treat registration very seriously and expect pupils and their parents to do the same.

For most pupils, the best place to be during term-time is in school, surrounded by the support of their friends and teachers. This is important not just for your child's learning, but also for their overall wellbeing, wider development and their mental health.

How to improve your child's school attendance and where to get support, January 2024

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' from the Department of 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

AIMS

*Throughout the policy the term parent(s) can, if appropriate, refer to carer(s) of any pupils.

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parent(s) in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school; and
- ensure parent(s) are aware of their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 School attendance is subject to various education laws and legislation and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and guidance produced by the Department for Education.

We expect pupils to be in school during these sessions and to be well presented, comfortable and ready to learn.

The Prep School day begins at 8.30am and ends at 3.50pm. There is a 60 minute lunch break. The senior school and sixth form start school at 8.30am and finish at 4:00pm. There is a 55 minute lunchbreak.

Records of attendance

It is a legal requirement that the school records two registration periods per day for all children of compulsory school age, as part of school attendance; these figures count towards your child's overall school attendance data.

N.B Sixth form school attendance is recorded via electronic "sign in" system, and absence is monitored.

Regular attendance at school is vital. Without it, the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory; put simply: absence means missed learning and potentially reduced attainment and social development/connection. It is a legal requirement that pupils of compulsory school age (term after the child turns five) receive full-time education and this, with the exception of those educated at home or elsewhere, means regular attendance at school (for clarity this means attending school in-person).

Permitting an absence from school without good reason is an offence and irregular attendance leads to pupils missing important lessons and therefore not fulfilling their true potential, with possible long-term effects.

All members of the school staff have a safeguarding responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and lateness; with the Head teacher having overall responsibility in the monitoring of attendance and lateness of every pupil including those within specific and identified groups such as service families, young carers, and SEND, however this list is not exhaustive.

We aim to create an ethos in which attendance and punctuality are recognised and valued by the whole school. Outstanding attendance by pupils is recognised and celebrated throughout the academic year. However, this is done in a low-key way to ensure those who are legitimately absent through illness do not feel undue pressure; their health and full recovery are the priority, we will require a doctor's letter and ongoing communication with parents and other professionals, as necessary, as we wish to ensure that those absent through genuine illness do not feel they should have been in school rather than prioritising their health and recovery.

REGISTRATION

- Pupils are registered electronically at the start of the school morning (8.30-8.40am) and at the start of the school afternoon (1.20pm in the Prep School and 1.55pm in the senior school) dependent on year group)

- The register will remain 'open' for 10 and 5 minutes respectively during these times, during which, if a pupil arrives 'late' they will be marked as present for the session but by using the 'L' code.
- Any pupil who arrives after the register has 'closed', will be marked as absent for the session using the 'U' code and will lose the mark for the whole session.
- From September 2025, under new EYFS guidance, all early year's settings must monitor and track prolonged absences (PA) as part of safeguarding. There is an expectation that parents contact us by 10am on the day of absence notifying us of the reason for absence. A log is kept of all absences. Persistent absence of children who are in receipt of EYFE may be at risk of having funding withdrawn.

Parents are expected to;

- Ensure their child arrives on time for registration.
- Inform the school of any illness. Parents may on occasion be asked to provide further details in relation to the absence in order for the absence to be authorised.
- Inform the school of any medical appointments during school time. An am/pm session could be unauthorised if a pupil is absent for a longer period than the appointment warrants.
- Inform the school of any other reason for absence.
- Inform the school of any reluctance to come to school so that any problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

The Pastoral and safeguarding teams monitor attendance and will follow-up if attendance falls below expectations.

The Department for Education (DfE) expects every pupil attending school to maintain a minimum attendance level of 90%; any figure below this is deemed as poor attendance. Department for Education guidance states that where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to one day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools are expected to sensitively consider the reasons for absence and put additional targeted support in place.

Parents of pupils falling into this category are likely to be contacted by the School so that the reasons for frequent absence can be clarified and help and support provided.

The school will be in touch to signal this as early as possible in the academic year if this becomes a concern.

Monitoring Attendance.

A report will run every two weeks to monitor attendance over the previous two week period and is reviewed. The team will be asked to confirm any known reasons for the absence. These reasons will be discussed in fortnightly safeguarding meetings and actions decided. Overall attendance responsibility rests with the Whole School Designed Safeguarding Lead.

For most pupils this will be advisory contact home. If a pupil's attendance continues to be a concern after advisory contact home has been made, parents will be invited in to school for a meeting to discuss the issue and ensure appropriate support is offered and a plan put in place. Informing the Local Authority In line with Government requirements, the Local Authority must be informed if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly or misses ten consecutive school days of unauthorised absence. The school must inform the Local Authority if a pupil misses 15 school days (either consecutively or cumulatively across an academic year) due to sickness.

The Head reserves the right to withdraw authorisation for any absences.

Local Authority – Pupil Entitlement Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance concerns together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to Pupil Entitlement and an Investigating Officer may be appointed. They will review the attendance issues and work with the family and the school to try and improve attendance. Parents or children may wish to contact Pupil Entitlement themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Telephone no. 03302 228200.

APPENDIX A

Stage 1 letter – Monitoring attendance

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Attendance Monitoring for [Student's Name]

I hope this letter finds you well.

At Burgess Hill Girls we are committed to supporting every student in achieving their full potential. Regular school attendance plays a vital role in academic success, personal development, and future opportunities. In line with national attendance guidance, we are writing to inform you that we are now monitoring your daughter's attendance. Your daughter's attendance is currently at [INSERT PERCENTAGE]

We understand that there may be genuine reasons for absence, and we are here to work with you to ensure that any barriers to attendance are addressed with care and understanding. Our aim is to support your daughter in maintaining consistent attendance to support her learning and wellbeing.

As part of this process, we will be reviewing attendance patterns and may contact you to offer support where needed.

If you have any questions or would like to speak with a member of staff about your daughter's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to help and want to ensure that your daughter feels supported and encouraged in her educational journey.

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Regards

Stage 2 letter – Attendance concern

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Attendance Concerns for [Student's Name] –

Following our previous correspondence we are writing to express our growing concern regarding your daughter's school attendance. As part of our commitment to ensuring every pupil receives the best possible education, the level of absence has not improved and as such we are worried about the impact on learning and wellbeing.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance, *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (2024), highlights that attendance is everyone's responsibility and that missing even a few days of school can significantly affect a child's academic progress, social development, and future opportunities. The guidance also states that pupils who are persistently absent (missing more than 10% of school days) are at increased risk of underachievement and long-term disadvantage.

We understand that there may be genuine reasons for absence, and we are committed to working with you to identify and address any barriers. At this stage, we would like you to come into school and meet with [INSERT NAME] to talk through how we can support you and your daughter. We may need to:

- Offer support and referrals to appropriate services.
- Request medical evidence for any future absences where applicable

We want to ensure your daughter feels supported and encouraged to attend school regularly.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued cooperation.

Stage 3 letter – Persistent attendance concerns – Pupil Entitlement Referral

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Stage 3 – Persistent Absence and Referral

Following our previous correspondence. We are writing to inform you that your daughter, [Student's Name], has now fallen into the category of persistent absence as defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as missing 10% or more of possible school sessions, whether authorised or unauthorised.

Despite previous communications and support offered her attendance has not improved to a satisfactory level. In line with our legal obligations under the DfE's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, we are now required to make a referral to the Local Authority. This referral may lead to further action, which could include: [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk)

We want to emphasise that our priority remains supporting your daughter's education and wellbeing. We are committed to working with you to remove any barriers to her attendance and encourage you to engage with us during this process.

Following our referral, we would like to discuss this matter further, please contact us as soon as possible.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.