

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Rationale

Braunton Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all students.

Students need to attend the Academy regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational disadvantage. There is evidence that truancy places children at risk and can result in students being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are strongly linked to students' well-being and safety.

It is the policy of Braunton Academy to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our Academy will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all students.

Braunton Academy will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

### Aims

To improve student attendance and punctuality.

To ensure student entitlement to a full-time education is monitored and supported.

To encourage students and parents/carers to comply with the legal requirements of school attendance.

To encourage and reward good habits of attendance and punctuality. To ensure presence at all lessons and timetabled activities.

## **Legal Framework**

1. Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education. They will be encouraged to contact the Academy early on the first day of absence and keep the school informed of any reasons for non-attendance.
2. Children registered at the Academy must by law attend regularly. Those falling below achieving the Government set target of 95% will be monitored with formal procedures for those below 90% which is classified as Persistent Absentee (PA).

## **Meetings**

Fortnightly meetings are held with Head of Year, Assistant Headteacher Student Support and Guidance and the Academy's Attendance Officer to ensure the policy is implemented and attendance monitored.

“Fast-Track”, truancy and parent/carers meetings to discuss and support students will be recorded.

All students who fall below 90% are to be known as “Persistent Absentee” (PAs). They are to be supported in improving their attendance. They will be monitored closely and regularly by the Academy's Attendance Officer, Head of Year and Tutor.

## **Attendance**

1. Students will be awarded 100% attendance certificates at the end of the school year to go into their Progress File. They will also receive a gift voucher.
2. Each term letters from the Principal are sent home to all students with 100% congratulating them on their achievement.
3. Best attending House will enjoy the privilege of being allowed first into lunch to recognise their achievements. This takes place on a weekly basis.
4. Assembly time and Tutor time will address the importance of attendance on a regular basis focussing on the link between attendance and achievement
5. The Academy will communicate attendance matters to parents via text, email, telephone, email, letter and through the Academy website

## **Absence from Braunton Academy**

There are only two categories of absence from the Academy:

**Authorised - approved**

**Unauthorised - not approved**

Only the Principal can approve absence from the Academy.

Absence will be recorded using the codes recommended by the Department for Education Guidance on School Attendance

### **Authorised (approved) absence – types of authorised absence that may be approved:-**

1. Leave of absence – for bereavement/funerals.
2. Medical absence for appointments – at Hospital or Orthodontic appointments. (Non urgent, routine check-up appointments should be made after the end of the school day or during the school holidays. Students are expected to be absent for the minimal amount of time and not absent for the whole day.)
3. Illness
4. Religious observance
5. If a student is excluded from the Academy for a behaviour-related incident, this is an authorised absence

### **Unauthorised (not approved) absence – types of authorised absence that will not be approved:-**

1. Absence due to birthday, shopping for uniform, looking after family members
2. Holiday in term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed to by the Principal – in line with the law implemented in 2013
3. Late arrival to the Academy after the register has closed has to be registered as an unauthorised absence

All absence – authorised and unauthorised – will be analysed and subject to challenge, to ensure that any concern regarding frequency, pattern or validity will be acted upon swiftly

Parents/Carers are expected to contact the Academy on the first day of absence and each day thereafter informing the Academy of the reason for absence and the expected date of return. This may be done by emailing: [attendance@braunton.academy](mailto:attendance@braunton.academy) or by leaving a message on the dedicated attendance voicemail on the main school number..

## **Punctuality**

1. Students arriving late to registration are recorded as L (late before registration closes). Every time a student is recorded as Late twice or more in a week, this will result in a lunchtime detention. Frequent late arrival, will be addressed by the Attendance Officer/Head of Year/Tutor and letters sent to parents. Persistent late arrival will result in parents and students being asked to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer.
2. Students arriving after 9.05 am report to Student Reception where they will be challenged about the reason for the late arrival. Parents/carers will be contacted if no acceptable reason is given.

3. If a student arrives after the register has closed, this is recorded as U (unauthorised late arrival.) Eight unauthorised sessions over a 10 week period can result in a Penalty Notice being given by the Local Authority.

## **Medical Appointments**

1. We monitor the amount of lessons missed due to medical appointments carefully.
2. We acknowledge that hospital and specialist clinic appointments, including orthodontic and ongoing dental treatment may require a student having time out of the Academy. Our expectation is that the minimum amount of learning is lost. We will seek an explanation from students and parents where a whole day is missed for this reason. Proof of unavoidable medical appointments in school time must be provided.
3. Routine non-urgent appointments must be made after school and during the school holidays.
4. Following an Orthodontic appointment, the school would expect that pain relief to be handed to the Appointed First Aider (with the child's name and dosage clearly written), to avoid the student being absent from school.

## **Illness**

1. All absence should be recorded on Yellow Form S2 – The Absence Request Form. This should be submitted as early as possible before the requested absence is due to take place.
2. Students are likely to experience bouts of illness from time to time. Some students will be managing chronic or more serious medical conditions that impact on their attendance. We will support students in these circumstances to ensure that they do not miss out on their education.
3. When a student is identified as having frequent absence for reasons of minor illness, a meeting will be arranged to discuss this with the Attendance Officer.

## **Holiday absence in term time**

1. If a parent feels there are exceptional circumstances that support a request for leave of absence in term time, they must put the request in writing to the Principal.
2. Each case will be considered individually and the decision communicated to the parents. Governors have adopted a zero tolerance to absence in term time for holidays and agreed that where parents ignore the policy, cases will be referred to the Local Authority for the issuing of a Penalty Notice (Fine).

## **Children Missing Education**

1. We have a duty to inform the Local Authority of any student who is on the school roll, not in attendance and whose whereabouts we have not been able to establish. We do this through completing a Student Tracking Form. This particularly applies to students who move to another authority or county but are not yet in education.

## **Home Education**

1. Parents have a right to educate their children other than at school. If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from school to pursue this option, this decision must be put in writing to the Principal. The Academy will then complete a form with the students' details and send to the Local Authority.

## **Formal Guidance Informing this Policy**

- 1996 Education Act which states that if any child of compulsory school age who is registered student at school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence
- 2006 Pupil Regulations amended in 2013
- Parental Responsibility measures – regarding Penalty Notices (Fines)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children DFE 2015 – keeping children safe
- Educating Children with Health Needs – DFE Jan 2013 – Ensuring children with health needs do not miss out
- Supporting students at school with medical conditions – June 2014
- Children missing education – children who are not on roll of school
- School Attendance – DFE November 2013
- Parental Responsibility Measure – Nov 2013
- Devon County Council – code of conduct with regards to issuing of Penalty Notice

## **Related Academy Policies**

- Behaviour For Learning and Relationships Policy
- Supporting Children With Medical Needs (Government guidance)
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection