



**Attendance Policy (Pupils) Including
'CME' and 'Children with health issues
who cannot attend school'**

Signed:	Hazel Simmons
Position:	Headteacher
Chair Of Governors	Tim Coulson
Signed	*awaiting signature
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1. Aims

The Bridge School is committed to providing effective, high quality education to all children and young people and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We provide a safe learning environment where all children feel valued and welcome.

For each child to fully benefit from everything that an education at The Bridge School has to offer, a high level of school attendance is essential. The Bridge School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children and young people. To this effect we aim for 100% attendance for each child and for each child to be punctual for the start of each day. To support parents and carers we have the following guidelines:

99% - 100%	We consider attendance to be outstanding.
97% - 98%	We consider attendance to be excellent.
95% - 96%	We consider attendance to be very good.
93% - 94%	We consider attendance to be satisfactory.
90% - 93%	Attendance requires improvement.
Below 90%	Attendance will be discussed and closely monitored by the Headteacher and Educational Welfare Officer. Further absence may not be authorised without medical evidence, and warning and penalty notices may be issued.

Attendance at school is vital not only for a child's ability to learn and achieve, but also for the social skills that they learn in interacting with their peers and adults; for learning life skills that will last throughout their life and for equipping them for a purposeful adulthood.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting excellent attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations.

2. School's Roles and Responsibilities

The whole school community has a responsibility for ensuring excellent school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of this policy is to clarify everyone's part and the expectation on everyone including pupils, parents / carers, teaching and support staff and school governors.

We will strive to provide an environment in which all of our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

We take unauthorised absence very seriously and act decisively to ensure that attendance is maximised.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending school.

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

[The Education Act 1996](#)

[The Education Act 2002](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

[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.

The Bridge School also works with the Children Missing from Education team at Suffolk County Council.

4. School Procedures

Attendance Register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first of the school day and at the start of the afternoon 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school as close to 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the start of the day will be taken at 9.10am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the afternoon will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

Pupils arriving after these times will be marked as late. The school actively discourages late arrivals and will seek an explanation from the parent / carer should this arise.

Classroom teachers / senior teaching assistants are responsible for completing the attendance registers.

Unplanned Absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence, for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health, by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also Section 6).

Parent /carers should contact the school reception on [01473 556200](tel:01473556200).

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parents/carers should let the class teacher know in advance via the home / school diary if their child has an upcoming medical appointment. Alternatively, parents/carers can also call the school reception on 01473 556200.

Appointment cards must be provided for all medical or dental appointments.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in Section 5.

Staff must inform the office staff of any pupil who is leaving school for any reason or returning to school following an appointment.

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

If there are problems which affect a student's punctuality we will investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible, including the identification of early help services or possible external support services. Should the problem persist, we will involve the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

Following Up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If there are problems with unauthorised absence we will investigate, identify and work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible including the identification of early help services or possible external support services.

Should the problem persist, we will involve the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

Reporting to Parents/Carers

We will report to parents/carers annually regarding their child's attendance record through the annual school report. However, absence is monitored on a weekly basis by the Safeguarding and Welfare Team and should any issues be identified we will ensure that immediate contact is made with parents/carers.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers every application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. The policy of the school is to not grant leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school is not a right. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, at least one month in advance of the intended leave of absence. The Headteacher will determine the number of days that will be authorised for the absence and will notify parents in writing.

If the school does not authorise all or part of the leave of absence but the parents still take the child out of school, or if the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow the school to give retrospective approval.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in Section 3.
- 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.

Legal Sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Attendance has a high profile at The Bridge School and is regularly discussed. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and in school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links for pupil attainment and adulthood.

The Bridge operates a First-Day Calling Process. This means that the parent will be contacted on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence.

7. Attendance Monitoring

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see Section 3).

Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

If a parent has not contacted the school to explain regarding their child's absence, the school will operate a first-day calling process. We will ensure that a call is made by 10.00am each day of absence.

If we cannot make contact on the main number provided, we will make contact on any other emergency numbers that have been provided. If we cannot make contact on any of the provided numbers, we will pay a visit to the family home. If we are still unable to make contact, we will contact the Educational Welfare Officer to take further advice.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors and the MAT senior team.

Whenever there is concern regarding attendance parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the absences. We aim to work in partnership with parents to resolve those problems. Should the problem persist, we will involve the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer as required.

8. Children Missing Education - Everyone's responsibility

The Bridge School will follow the Protocols set out by Suffolk CC and work with all agencies to collectively reduce the likelihood of Children Missing Education.

If, at any time, it is believed that a child is at risk of harm, the person with the concerns must make an immediate referral to Social Care Services in line with Suffolk Safeguarding Board Procedures. These can be found, together with the referral guidance at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/pupil-attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-from-education/>

Further assistance and information can be obtained from: CME@suffolk.gov.uk or the Customer Contact Centre: 0345 606 6172
The full address for referrals and advice is:

The Children Missing Education Team
Children and Young People (CYP) Services
Suffolk County Council
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
IP1 2BX

9.Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school regularly, ideally termly. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher supports staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Safeguarding and Welfare Team

The Safeguarding and Welfare Team:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with Local Authority Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class Teachers / Senior Teaching Assistants

Class Teachers / Senior Teaching Assistants are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Administration Team

The administration team take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. The administration team also undertake first-day calling arrangements in establishing the whereabouts of a child.

10. Parents/Carers Responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the education Act 1996 and those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of the child) who will be supported by The Bridge School.

The Bridge School expects parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to minimum
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any request for absence and not condone unjustified absence from school

Parents will also be expected to:

- Notify The Bridge School on the first day of absence and the reason why your child is not in school.
- Ensure that your child arrives at school on time, properly dressed for the day.
- Work in partnership with the school for example by attending parent's meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their child's work and activities.
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. The Bridge School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

11. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher / Safeguarding and Welfare Team. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

12. Pupils who cannot attend school due to health needs.

The Bridge School aims to ensure that:

Suitable education is arranged for pupils on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs

Pupils, staff and parents understand what the school is responsible for when this education is being provided by the local authority

This policy reflects the requirements of the [Education Act 1996](#) and complies with our funding agreement.

Initially, the school will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school. We will provide a programme that is on-line, streamed or delivered resources and worksheets (or a combination) to best meet the needs of the pupil. The welfare team would make regular calls and visits if that is appropriate. The teacher would similar make contact by phone or video call at least weekly. Parents are able to upload completed work via 'Earwig' for assessment, if this is appropriate.

We will constantly discuss what is working and what is not about these arrangements and, if possible, amend to make better as required.

As and when the pupil is able to return to school, an appropriate transition programme will be created and discussed with parents.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, The Bridge School will:

Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the pupil

Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required

Help make sure that the provision offered to the pupil is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully

When reintegration is anticipated, work with the local authority to:

- Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the pupil to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible
- Enable the pupil to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through videos, emails, invitations to school events or streaming to lessons from their school)
- Create personalised transition plans for each child returning to school
- Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made in school either for the short or longterm.

13.Links with Other Policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection, Accessibility and Safeguarding Policy.

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

Children Missing Education – Reporting Template

If you suspect that a child is missing from education, please complete this form, giving as much information as possible.

Name of Person Completing form:

Date:

NAME OF CHILD (if known)	
DATE OF BIRTH or (Estimated age of Child)	
ADDRESS (or if not known, the Street / Area Child known to have links with / was seen in)	
DESCRIPTION OF CHILD (if not known to you): i.e. physical description, ethnicity, colour/length of hair, distinguishing features / clothes	
CIRCUMSTANCES KNOWN / or WITNESSED	
YOUR CONCERNS	
PARENT(S) NAMES & ADDRESS(ES) (if known)	
CONTACT DETAILS of Parents	
NAME of CHILD'S SCHOOL (or any school that the child may have links to)	
Contact details of Person completing the form:	

Please return to: CME@Suffolk.gov.uk

CME Template v2.1