



**KING EDWARD VI
FOUNDATION
BIRMINGHAM**

Educational excellence for our City



**KING EDWARD VI
ACADEMY TRUST
BIRMINGHAM**

Attendance Policy

Responsible Board/Committee	Academy Trust and Foundation Board
Policy Type	Hybrid Policy
Policy Owner	Education
Statutory	Yes
Publish Online	Yes
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Review Cycle	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.
Next Review Date	July 2026
Version	2

School	King Edward VI Sheldon Heath Academy
School Policy Owner	M Billyeald
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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 King Edward VI Sheldon Heath Academy.
- 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 the pastoral team. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents/carers and students should contact our attendance officer Denise Reid at dreid@keshacademy.com

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. The importance of attendance and punctuality is reinforced to students and their parents at every opportunity. Regular assemblies, sharing of attendance information, certificates, meetings with families and extensive reward schemes all reinforce the Academy's expectations and the links between good attendance and student achievement.
- 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 regulations¹ 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.

¹ [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

- 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.
- 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 M Billyeald, Head of School.

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.
- 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 [students' attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Registration session	Start time	End time
Morning	8:35	9:05
Afternoon	12:30	1:10

- 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 student 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 student arrives at the School after the relevant registration period has ended but within the relevant session, they must immediately go to 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.
- iii. Any unexplained absence will be followed up by the School promptly. A phonecall is made to the contacts on Arbor for a student where we have no reason for that absence, in the event of no contact being made given an absence text is sent. All unexplained absences are screened by the Assistant DSL who then advises of any home visits required for unexplained absences on that day.
- 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 Head of Year.

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 Principal and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- x. Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the principal will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
 - Will be confirmed in writing.
 - Is solely at the principal's discretion.
 - Is final.
- xi. Where permission is granted, the principal 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 observance

- 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 Denise Reid 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 support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted 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.
- 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 are:

Where no reason is given on 2nd consecutive day a home visit is prioritised.

If no contact is made further enquiries with extended family and neighbours is conducted that day however if we suspect that a child who is not at their last known address and has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or has left school

suddenly and their destination is unknown we will contact Birmingham CME referral service and follow the advice provided.

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.

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”.