

Blossom House Lower School and Upper House



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

EYFS, Adapted Curriculum, Primary, Secondary, Post 16

Motspur Park | Euston | Wimbledon

Admin Office: Reviewed September 2025

Next review September 2026

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY (see **appendix A** for flow chart of Procedure for monitoring Attendance and Punctuality)

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school.

The government expects:

- Schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Schools to ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Schools to act early to address patterns of absence;
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly;
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

Good attendance and punctuality is a vital and integral part of a school, to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

Please refer to [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/123456/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

At Blossom House School we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

We understand that because of our children's special needs, it is inevitable that they may have hospital appointments or clinic visits (e.g. CAMHS) more frequently than pupils in mainstream schools.

Communication

Blossom House School is a happy school. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about each child's welfare.

Attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, Blossom House school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes small things upset children, which means they become unhappy and may not want to come to school. Parents and the school need to be aware of this.

Punctuality and absence (including for illness)

From 2006/07, independent schools are no longer required to submit absence data on the Schools Census. However we consider punctuality and attendance in school to be extremely important.

Daily attendance is recorded in morning and afternoon registration on the Bromcom Management Information System (MIS) by group leaders. Parents are asked to email or ring the school office as early as possible if their child is going to be late for any reason or absent that day because of illness. They should inform the school by email or letter if they know in advance that their child is going to be absent from school (eg for a hospital appointment). These details are recorded by the office staff on the MIS and passed on to group leaders. If no notification is received about a child's absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised, and the parents will be contacted.

- If your child is not going to be in school please call the office on 0208 946 7348 or email the school at mpadmin@blossomhouseschool.co.uk to report the absence. Please do this before 8.30am **and on every day of absence.**
- If we have not heard from you by 9.30am then we will send you a text asking you to email or call the school office.
- If we do not hear from you by 10.00am then we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence.
- If we do not hear from you by 10.30am we will refer the missing pupil to our school Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- According to latest government guidance, if we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is, then a member of staff may go to the family home.

- If we are still unable to get a response, we may report it to the police and/or children's social care, as your child will then be classed a 'missing child'.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe, and to ensure that we are following latest government guidance.

The school gate is closed at 8.45am when registration starts, any pupils who arrive after this time must come into the main reception area and be signed in by a member of the Admin team. The MIS is then updated so that late pupils are recorded as such.

The office gives termly attendance records to Specialist Advisors. The school monitors attendance below 90% and if a child is regularly late for school or has an attendance percentage under 85%, then the Specialist Advisor will contact parents to discuss this and see what can be put in place to improve the situation. In these cases, monitoring will continue on a weekly basis, and a copy of hospital appointment letters or emails must be provided. In serious cases of absence or lateness the Local Authority is kept closely informed; we work with pupils' families, case managers or social workers to do everything possible to help pupils be in school and on time.

We may suggest Early Help support if your child continues to have difficulties with attendance or punctuality. Staff will refer any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance, or parents can request additional support themselves.

In addition to any serious cases of absence being monitored and addressed an attendance action plan will be put in place if necessary. A whole school attendance and punctuality report is produced each term to enable this continual monitoring and action.

The Leadership Team is informed about such cases of absence and action taken, and the team also looks at the whole school attendance.

Reintegration after extended absence due to medical needs will be assessed on individual requirements. Special Advisors will work together with parents, Local Authorities and any relevant medical and external bodies to identify an appropriate plan.

Unauthorised absences protocol

A pupil's absence will be **unauthorised** if:

- **no reason is given** for the pupil's absence; or
- the **school is not satisfied with the reason(s) given** for the absence.

Where a pupil is absent without permission (i.e. unauthorised) for a continuous period of 10 days or more, the school must report this to the local authority in line with their regular reporting cycles.

Sickness

If a child has suffered from sickness or diarrhoea, they should be kept away from school for **48 hours** after symptoms have stopped

Holidays in term time

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 and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of authorised absence.

Parents/carers can receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without prior consent from school. Consent cannot be given retrospectively. The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the absence is granted.

Blossom House School follows the latest Government advice on school attendance and absence. If you are considering taking your child out of school during term-time hours, you must get permission from the Headteacher. You can only do this if:

- you make an application to the Headteacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with)
- there are exceptional circumstances
- It's up to the Headteacher how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Parents are expected to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays rather than in term time to ensure their child's education is not disrupted.

Our holidays tend to be slightly longer than those for mainstream schools and therefore it should not be necessary to book flights etc during our term time.

Term dates are fixed up to 1 year ahead, and these are on our website or available from the school office. Permission **must** be sought in advance from the Headteacher if parents wish to book a holiday outside normal holiday dates.

Blossom House school is concerned at the number of parents taking their child out of school for holidays during term time for one or more days, with or without first seeking permission. There is an increased number of emails or phone calls simply stating that their child will not be in school.

Taking your child out of school during Term time hours has the following negative impact on your child:

- It sends a message to your child (and their friends – who will always know if a child is going on holiday rather than 'ill') that school is not important;
- It is always disruptive to the child's education and to the carefully planned curriculum that they miss.

- Mainstream schools do not give permission to take a holiday in term time at any point. This is always marked as unauthorised except in very exceptional circumstances, and parents may be fined by the local authority (per parent).

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- act early to address patterns of absence.
- the regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

We do not believe that it is in the child's best interests to miss school to go on holiday. We also do not believe it is fair, once a child has a place here (usually funded by local authorities at a cost of over £1,000 per week) to take them out of school. It can be an extremely challenging process to have a child placed at Blossom House and there is great competition for these places; as well as the LA funding to provide those places. Most parents have gone through a lengthy and expensive process to enable their child to benefit from our therapeutic provision, and very many parents are not successful. Every single day in school matters, to every child.

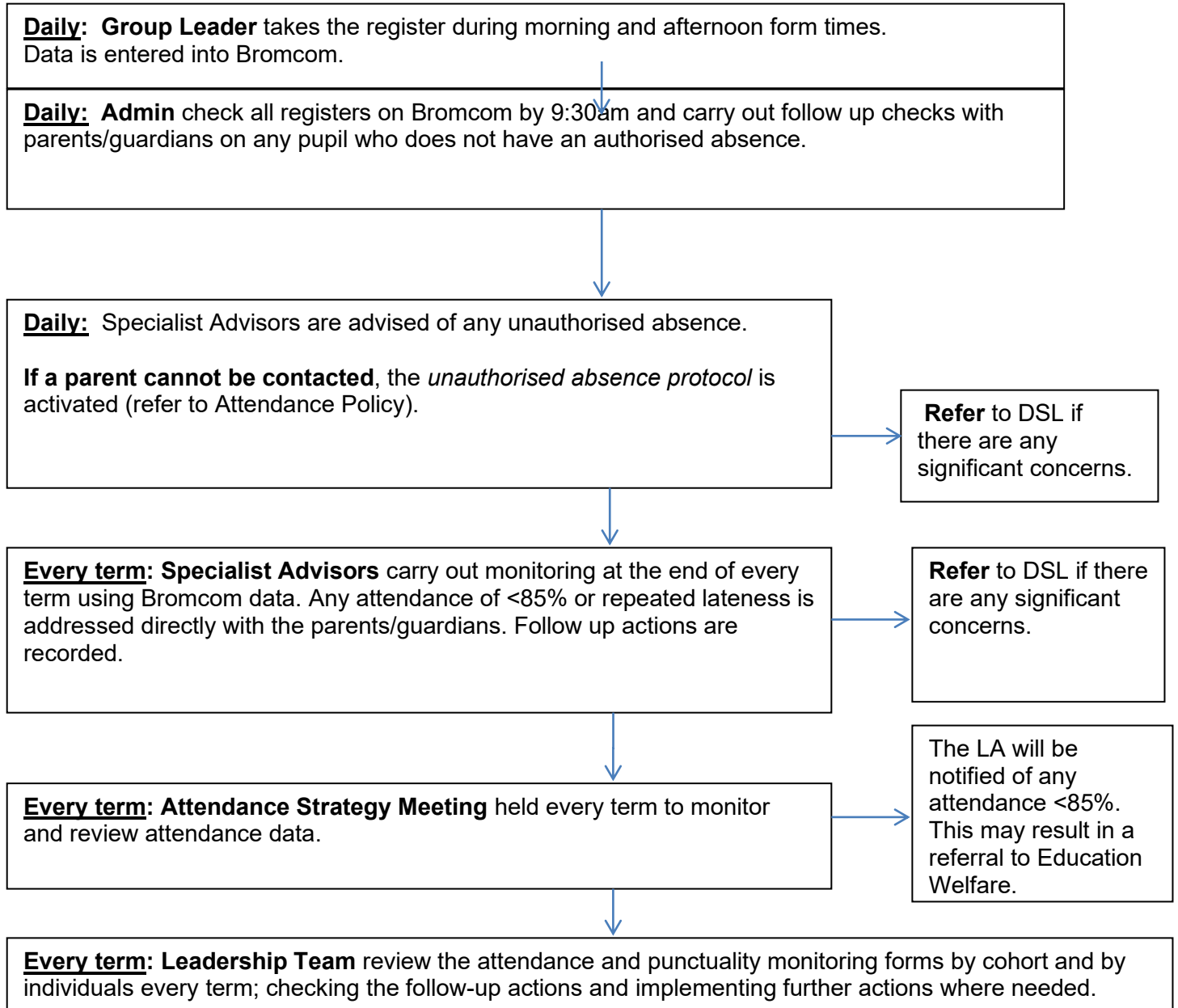
Blossom House is closely monitoring the current increased pattern of absence. From March 2017 we have implemented a drive to reduce this absence, and will be marking as unauthorised every child who is taken on holiday without prior permission from the Headteacher (permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances).

The school will make the decision around reporting unauthorised absence to the child's local authority.

We understand the negative impact this will have on our attendance figures but believe that it is important to send the correct message to parents (and therefore to our pupils) and make attempts to reduce such unauthorised absences.

Appendix A

Procedure for Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality



Appendix B

Attendance Protocol and Policy Post16 / College Provision

THE CLASSIFICATION OF ABSENCES

An **authorised absence** is granted by the Post16 Leadership Team and includes illness, medical appointments, bereavement and other circumstances where Post16 Leadership team deems appropriate.

PROOF OF APPOINTMENTS SHOULD BE SENT TO:
mpadmin@blossomhouseschool.co.uk

Even authorised absence is still time away from school and for this reason medical and dental appointments, as far as possible, should be arranged for out of Post16 and College hours. Holiday granted during term time is at the discretion of the Principal. A written request for leave of absence would be expected in advance.

An **unauthorised absence** is any absence which does not fall into the following categories:

- Absence caused by illness or other unavoidable cause
- An approved absence for religious observance
- Situations where Post16 Leadership team authorises absence e.g. work experience.

Persistent Absentees

Any student who has an attendance percentage under or close to 85% of teaching time across college and Blossom combined.

This group of students are monitored assiduously through data analysis and personalised strategies for re-integration formulated by the Post16 Leadership Team and the Pastoral Coordinator.

In the case of prolonged or repeated absences due to illness students will be requested to provide a doctor's letter. If the situation continues, Post16 Leadership Team will contact parents to discuss the absence.

Absence	authorised	proof required in advance
Personal issues e.g. doctor, dental, opticians, orthodontist	Yes	Students/Parents/Carer to send/ PROOF OF APPOINTMENT SENT TO mpadmin@blossomhouseschool.co.uk

Absence	authorised	proof required in advance
appointments & funerals		
Birthdays or similar celebrations	No	
Driving test - practical	No	
Driving Test - Theory exam and lessons	No	
Holidays	No	
Religious Observances	Yes	Parents/Carers to email Specialist Advisor in advance
College Open Days	Yes	Parents/Carers to email Specialist Advisor in advance

REPORTING ABSENCE PROTOCOL

In the case of illness, on the first day of absence students are expected to notify Post16 Administrators. Followed up by a confirmation phone call /email of illness by parents/carers to Post16 Administrators or main admin office.

If a student is absent due to illness which lasts more than one day, the parent/carers should contact Post16 each day to provide an update, unless otherwise agreed by the Specialist Advisor. Post16 expects notification by 9am.

Parents contacting Post16 regarding their child's absence should use the following email address: MPPost16Absence@blossomhouseschool.co.uk .

This is a group email to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of a student's absence. Evidence of any outside appointments are required to be emailed to the school for approval. If a student's absence is due to reasons of a sensitive nature then you are welcome to contact their Specialist Advisor separately but please ensure an email goes to the absence email address.

If a student has not arrived to Post16 / College when expected the following process will be triggered:

- WhatsApp message or phone call from the Post16 mobile / College Link Mentors (CLM's) to the student to ask where they are
- If there is no report from the student after an hour when they are due into P16/college, parents/carers will be contacted via text/ email and then followed up with a phone call to notify them that the student has not reached Post16/College
- If the student reports they are not coming into school – parents/carers will be contacted via text/ email and then followed up with a phone call to confirm reason for absence

If after two hours, from the time the student is expected at P16/college, staff are unable to contact parents/carers to confirm the student's absence this will be passed on to the Safeguarding Team and Specialist Advisors.

The primary Safeguarding concern at this stage is for the safety of the unaccounted student.

Triggering the following actions (deemed most appropriate on the circumstances of each case):

- contacting the student's emergency contacts, or other contacts of the family who P16 reasonably expect may be able to advise of the student's whereabouts
- contacting other professionals linked to the student
- contacting siblings' schools
- home visits to the family address
- making a referral to Children's Social Care
- contacting the police to report 'missing student'

Once P16 establishes the reason for the absence, it will be marked as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason.

Parents/carers are not required to contact P16 on the day of an absence if the parent/carer has already formally notified the Specialist Advisors prior to the day of absence and the absence has been agreed in advance.

Following up on unexplained absences can take up a considerable amount of P16 resources and staff time, therefore we ask students, parents/carer to support with the above protocol.

Emergency Contacts

Students are required to supply details of at least one adult emergency contact. It is the responsibility of the student and their parent/carer to keep these contact details up to date by communicating to mpadmin@blossomhouseschool.co.uk

This policy applies to all students in Post16 (even if your child is 18+ years old) as we still have a duty of care to ensure their safety. Therefore, regardless of the reason of absence the most important aspect of this policy is for parents/carers to keep us informed.