The BRIDGE SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

May 2026

1. Policy Statement

The Bridge School is committed to ensuring that every student has access to high-quality education, consistent routines, and the support they need to thrive.

Attendance is everyone's business. All staff employed by The Bridge School are accountable for promoting good attendance through their daily interactions, vigilance, and consistent communication with families. Every member of staff has a responsibility to reinforce expectations, identify concerns early, and support and promote good attendance in line with school procedures.

Regular attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, wellbeing, and positive outcomes. As a PRU provision, we recognise the complex barriers that may impact attendance and are committed to a trauma-informed, relational and solution-focused approach.

2. Aims

- Promote excellent attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- Identify and address barriers early through a Wave Approach.
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are followed when a child is absent.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, and agencies.
- Ensure attendance data informs decisions and planning.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Students

Students are expected to take an active role in their attendance by arriving on time, attending school regularly, and engaging positively in learning. They are encouraged to communicate any concerns or barriers to attendance with a trusted adult, follow agreed attendance plans, and cooperate with any support put in place to help them attend.

Students are expected to:

- Attend school each day
- Arrive at school on time each day
- Arrive at school prepared for the day and in full uniform

Parents/carers

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, and prepared to engage in learning.

All parents/carers should:

- Encourage their child to attend school each day
- Report absence to the school office before 8:45am
- Provide a note for unauthorised absence upon the child's return to school
- Support their child with positive routines e.g. sleep, uniform, travel

- Engage with attendance meetings and interventions

SLT and DSL

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has strategic responsibility for attendance and to ensure that it remains a whole-school priority. SLT is responsible for setting clear expectations, reviewing attendance data regularly, and ensuring robust systems are in place for monitoring, intervention, and support. This includes overseeing attendance policies, holding staff to account for implementation, and ensuring attendance practice is safeguarding-led and trauma-informed.

All SLT are expected to:

- Attendance is monitored and reviewed weekly
- Attendance is reported to the Management Committee for oversight
- Attendance matters are viewed with a safeguarding lens

All staff

Our ethos is that attendance is everyone's business. This means that all staff have a responsibility for promoting positive attendance, responding to patterns of absence, and communicating with families to support student engagement in school.

All staff are expected to:

- Maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality
- Respond to non-attendance on the first day of absence
- Support students and families with a solution focused approach to promote good attendance
- Follow attendance guidance within this policy

4. Principles

Our approach to attendance is:

- Safeguarding led so that it prioritises the safety of the child and recognises poor attendance and potential indicators of risk.
- Trauma-informed to recognise that poor attendance may be linked to adverse experiences, unmet needs and Emotional Based School Non Attendance (EBSNA)
- Relationship-based where staff strive to forge positive relationships and work in partnership with students, parents and carers.
- Early intervention focused so that absence issues are addressed at an early stage.
- A solution focused approach to address attendance concerns with supportive and realistic interventions.

5. Waved Approach to Attendance

The Bridge School uses a waved approach to respond to attendance issues that maps support for children and families at each level. Interventions may cross over from time to time and as appropriate when a bespoke attendance plan is put in place.

Wave 1 -UNIVERSAL SUPPORT 90%-100% attendance • Meet & greet • Daily and weekly reward

• Rapid 1st day absence response
• Next day return to school follow up

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Wave 2– TARGETED SUPPORT

50%-89%

- Everyday contact
- Home/school attendance improvement meeting
- School minibus
- EWO referral
- Weekly priority during TAC
- Attendance plan
- Police welfare visits

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Wave 3 – INTENSIVE SUPPORT

0-50%

• Multi-agency
• Phased return
• Weekly home visits

- Legal route

6. Daily Attendance Procedures

School starts at 8:45am and registers close at 09:30. Students arriving after 9am will be marked L for Late. Students arriving after 9:30am will be marked U for unauthorised. The school office is responsible for first day contact which starts after registration closes at 9:30am.

Unexplained absences will trigger calls, texts, and in some circumstances home visits. Staff will log contact and outcomes using Arbor and will log safeguarding concerns on CPOMS. Attendance and Safeguarding matters are tracked and monitored daily by the safeguarding team and reviewed each Friday afternoon at the Safeguarding Debrief.

Attendance triage begins at 8:45am by the Keyworker Team who will make supportive contact home to students with persistent absence or absence patterns that are a cause for concern.

7. Working with Parents/Carers

Our attendance policy will consider the uniqueness of our setting and the challenges that some children and families face. We use a supportive and solution-focused approach to conversations, aiming to remove barriers and agree practical next steps

Each child at The Bridge School is allocated to a Keyworker who will support students and families holistically during their time at The Bridge School. Keyworkers will work closely with students and families to identify barriers to attendance and communicate regularly with home if attendance becomes a concern.

8. Support for Students

A range of supportive and flexible measures are available to help students overcome barriers to attendance and engagement. This includes; SEMH support, counselling through Connect Counselling Services, one-to-one keyworker support, travel training and a weekly bus pass.

Students may also be supported through access to health and mental health services, alongside coordinated pastoral and safeguarding input, to ensure individual needs are identified early and appropriate support is put in place to promote wellbeing, inclusion, and sustained re-engagement with learning.

9. Monitoring & Reporting

Attendance is monitored daily, weekly, and half-termly to ensure timely identification of concerns. An attendance dashboard is shared weekly with all staff to track patterns of absence and progress of attendance. Tracked students and priority groups are closely monitored to enable early intervention and targeted support.

Regular reports are provided to SLT, governors, Educational Welfare Services and the Local Authority where required, ensuring clear oversight, accountability, and informed decision-making.

10. Rewards

Attendance rewards are used to positively recognise and encourage improved attendance, effort, and engagement. Rewards are inclusive and accessible, celebrating progress as well as high attendance through class-based, group, and individual incentives. These may include certificates, prizes, and positive communication home. Rewards are designed to motivate students in a fair and supportive way to reinforce the importance of regular attendance while recognising individual circumstances and progress.

Daily attendance raffle.

All students who are in school on time will be entered into a daily raffle where one winner will collect a prize of a £5 Love to Shop Voucher.

Weekly Prize Pot

All students who achieve 100% attendance for the week will receive a share of the weekly pot. The pot is set at £50 and winners collect their share into a pot bank. Students can use this as a savings goal over a period of time to purchase an item of their choice through the school. Cash or voucher exchange is not permitted for this.

How this works; For example, Timothy wants a new sports top from JD sports. The cost is £45. Timothy accumulates £45 in the pot bank and would like to cash out. Staff will order this item for delivery to school. Timothy's pot bank is reset to £0 and he starts a new saving goal.

Class rewards

These are set by class teachers and can be individualised or group incentives. These are pre agreed by the Head Teacher.

11. Working with Educational Welfare

The school will work closely with the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and the Local Authority to address persistent or complex attendance concerns. Where attendance does not improve despite appropriate support and intervention, cases may be referred for further monitoring, advice, or statutory action.

Penalty notices or fines are considered only as a last resort, in line with Local Authority guidance, and where support has been offered and attendance remains a significant concern. All decisions are made with safeguarding, proportionality, and the child's best interests at the forefront, ensuring legal measures do not replace early help and supportive practice.

12. Legal Framework

The Bridge School will adhere to statutory requirements and be guided by Ofsted expectations that schools take a proactive, safeguarding-led, and evidence-based approach to attendance as outlined below.

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, statutory from 19 August 2024) sets out the minimum expectations for schools, governing bodies, academy trusts, parents, and Local Authorities, including early identification of need, a "support first" approach, accurate registration, targeted intervention, and proportionate legal action where necessary. Schools are expected to analyse attendance data routinely and act swiftly to prevent persistent and severe absence. [gov.uk]
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 Reinforces the strong link between attendance and safeguarding, identifying poor or irregular attendance as a potential indicator of abuse, neglect, or unmet need. Schools are expected to respond to absence concerns within their safeguarding systems and ensure information sharing and escalation where risk is identified. [gov.uk],
- Children Missing Education (CME) Statutory Guidance Places duties on schools to identify, track, and refer pupils who are missing education or at risk of becoming so, ensuring timely action to safeguard children and secure education provision. [gov.uk]
- National Framework for Penalty Notices (effective from August 2024) Introduces a nationally consistent threshold and escalation process for attendance fines, ensuring legal intervention is applied fairly, consistently, and only after appropriate support has been offered or where support is not appropriate (e.g. unauthorised term-time holidays). https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance
- Education Act 2004 and Children Act 2004 Establish the statutory duty on schools and Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, underpinning all attendance, early help, and safeguarding responsibilities. [gov.uk]

This policy supports Ofsted's focus on high expectations, strong safeguarding culture, inclusive practice, and effective partnership with families, ensuring attendance practice improves outcomes, wellbeing, and safety for all pupils.

Review
This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if needed based on guidance or safeguarding learning.