



# The Burgess Hill Academy

## Attendance Policy

### 2026-27

|                   |           |       |                |
|-------------------|-----------|-------|----------------|
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## Key contacts

| Role                                                        | Contact details                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Senior attendance champion and Designated Safeguarding Lead | Adam Griffith –<br><a href="mailto:a.griffith@theburgesshillacademy.org.uk">a.griffith@theburgesshillacademy.org.uk</a> |
| Attendance team                                             | <a href="mailto:absence@theburgesshillacademy.org.uk">absence@theburgesshillacademy.org.uk</a>                          |
| Student absence line                                        | 01444 241691                                                                                                            |
| Academy office                                              | <a href="mailto:office@theburgesshillacademy.org.uk">office@theburgesshillacademy.org.uk</a>                            |
| West Sussex Pupil Entitlement: Investigation                | <a href="mailto:pei@westsussex.gov.uk">pei@westsussex.gov.uk</a> / 033 022 28200                                        |



## 1. Aims

At The Burgess Hill Academy, we believe that school should give every student the knowledge, experiences and opportunities they need to thrive. We want our students to leave us as confident, capable young people with excellent outcomes and a wide range of choices open to them for the future.

Regular attendance is essential to achieving this. Students who attend consistently are better able to access the curriculum, maintain relationships, participate in academy life and achieve strong outcomes.

- promoting excellent attendance and punctuality;
- establishing high and clearly understood expectations;
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- identifying emerging concerns quickly;
- understanding and addressing barriers to attendance;
- providing appropriate support to students and families;
- ensuring that attendance concerns are considered as part of safeguarding;
- working closely with families, the Trust, the local authority and other agencies;
- using formal and legal intervention where support has not secured improvement, has not been engaged with or is not appropriate;
- recognising improvements in attendance as well as consistently strong attendance.

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. Staff must communicate consistent expectations, complete registers accurately and promptly, identify concerns and carry out agreed actions. The academy's approach is based on support, clarity and accountability.

## 2. Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy has been prepared with regard to the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance and the legal framework governing school attendance.

- the Education Act 1996;
- the Education Act 2002;
- the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- the Children and Families Act 2014;
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice;
- statutory guidance on children missing education;
- statutory guidance on supporting students with medical conditions;
- statutory guidance on education for children with health needs who cannot attend school;
- the national framework for penalty notices;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.



This policy should be read alongside the academy's safeguarding, SEND, medical, behaviour, alternative provision, admissions, children missing education, equality and complaints procedures.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Sussex Learning Trust**

- promoting attendance across its academies;
- ensuring that academy leaders fulfil their statutory duties;
- monitoring attendance information across the Trust;
- providing appropriate support and challenge;
- ensuring that attendance forms part of school improvement and safeguarding oversight;
- supporting academies to share effective practice.

#### **3.2 Local Governing Body**

- receive and scrutinise attendance information;
- monitor the implementation of this policy;
- challenge leaders where attendance is below expectations or where groups are disproportionately affected;
- monitor persistent and severe absence;
- consider the impact of attendance strategies and intervention;
- provide assurance to the Trust in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

#### **3.3 Headteacher**

- implementing this policy;
- establishing high expectations for attendance and punctuality;
- ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion;
- ensuring that sufficient staffing and resources are available;
- monitoring academy and group-level attendance;
- reporting to governors and the Trust;
- deciding whether requests for leave of absence meet the exceptional-circumstances threshold;
- approving referrals for legal intervention where appropriate;
- ensuring that attendance systems are regularly evaluated.

#### **3.4 Senior attendance champion**

- providing strategic leadership of attendance;
- communicating a clear vision for attendance improvement;
- ensuring that attendance is treated as a whole-academy priority;
- evaluating systems, expectations and practice;
- overseeing analysis of academy, group and individual attendance;
- ensuring that disadvantaged, SEND and other vulnerable students are monitored closely;



- coordinating attendance, safeguarding, behaviour and inclusion work;
- liaising with the local authority and external agencies;
- checking that agreed attendance actions are completed.

### **3.5 Attendance Manager and attendance team**

- monitor the completion and accuracy of registers;
- follow up unexplained absence promptly;
- record reasons for absence and apply the appropriate attendance code;
- complete first-day absence contact;
- identify students requiring urgent safeguarding action;
- monitor individual, group and academy attendance;
- identify patterns of absence and lateness;
- maintain clear records of contact, meetings, support and intervention;
- coordinate attendance meetings and improvement plans;
- prepare referrals to the local authority.

### **3.6 Designated Safeguarding Lead**

- ensure that unexplained, persistent or severe absence is considered as a possible safeguarding concern;
- identify students whose absence requires immediate safeguarding action;
- coordinate information from attendance, safeguarding, SEND, medical, behaviour and pastoral systems;
- determine whether referrals to Children's Social Care, the police or other agencies are required;
- oversee safeguarding decisions relating to welfare visits and children missing education.

### **3.7 Pastoral leaders**

- know the attendance position of students within their year group;
- review attendance information regularly;
- contact students and families where concerns emerge;
- identify barriers and coordinate appropriate support;
- complete agreed attendance actions within the required timescale;
- contribute to attendance improvement plans;
- monitor the impact of intervention;
- escalate concerns promptly.

### **3.8 Subject leaders, teachers and tutors**

- complete registers accurately and within the required timescale;
- report suspected truancy or unexplained absence from lessons immediately;
- communicate concerns to the attendance or safeguarding team;
- promote attendance and punctuality;



- support students returning after absence;
- make reasonable adjustments and provide support where agreed;
- contribute to attendance plans and meetings when requested.

### 3.9 Parents and carers

- ensure that their child attends every day the academy is open;
- ensure that their child arrives on time and ready to learn;
- report absence before 8.25 am on each day of absence;
- provide an accurate reason for absence;
- maintain at least two current emergency contacts wherever possible;
- arrange routine appointments outside the academy day wherever possible;
- avoid arranging holidays or other avoidable absence during term time;
- attend meetings and engage with support;
- work with the academy and other agencies to address barriers.

### 3.10 Students

- attend every day;
- arrive at the academy and lessons on time;
- attend all timetabled lessons and activities;
- follow signing-in and signing-out procedures;
- speak to an appropriate adult when experiencing barriers to attendance;
- engage with agreed support.

## 4. Academy day and attendance registers

### 4.1 Academy day

The academy site opens to students at 8.20 am. Students must arrive by 8.25 am and be ready for registration at 8.30 am.

| Activity         | Time              |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Registration     | 8.30–8.45 am      |
| DEAR or assembly | 8.45–9.00 am      |
| Period 1         | 9.00–10.00 am     |
| Period 2         | 10.00–11.00 am    |
| Break            | 11.00–11.25 am    |
| Period 3         | 11.25 am–12.25 pm |
| Period 4         | 12.25–1.25 pm     |
| Lunch            | 1.25–2.00 pm      |
| Period 5         | 2.00–3.00 pm      |



## 4.2 Statutory registers

The academy will maintain an admission register and an attendance register in accordance with statutory requirements. The attendance register will be taken at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The academy will also record attendance at each timetabled lesson so that students can be located and internal truancy identified promptly.

## 4.3 Register opening and closing

The morning register will be taken at 8.30 am and will close at 9.00 am. The afternoon register will be taken at 12.25 pm and will close at 12.55 pm. A student arriving after the register has started but before it closes will be recorded using code L. A student arriving after the register has closed will normally be recorded using code U, unless another authorised code properly applies.

## 4.4 Amendments and retention

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date of the amendment;
- the name or identity of the person making it.

Attendance records will be retained in accordance with statutory requirements and the Trust's records-retention arrangements.

## 5. Reporting absence

Parents and carers must report an absence by 8.25 am on each day their child is absent. Absence can be reported by telephone on 01444 241691 or by email to [absence@theburgesshillacademy.org.uk](mailto:absence@theburgesshillacademy.org.uk). The message should include the student's full name, year group, specific reason for absence, anticipated date of return and any relevant safeguarding or medical information.

## 5.1 Unplanned absence

Absence caused by physical or mental illness will normally be authorised where the academy is satisfied that the student is not well enough to attend. Medical evidence will not be requested routinely, but may be requested where absence is frequent, prolonged, patterned, disputed or where support or statutory action requires further information.

## 5.2 Illness

Routine appointments should be arranged outside academy hours wherever possible. Where an appointment must take place during the academy day, parents should notify the academy in advance and the student should attend before and/or after the appointment where reasonably possible.

## 5.3 Medical and dental appointments



## **6. First-day absence and unexplained absence**

Where a student expected to attend does not arrive and no reason has been provided, the academy will check registers and internal information, contact parents and emergency contacts, consider safeguarding risk and take further action proportionate to the concern. This may include a welfare visit, contacting professionals, referral to Children's Social Care or contacting the police where there is an immediate concern for safety.

Where code N is used because the reason has not yet been established, the correct code will be entered as soon as possible and within five school days. If no satisfactory reason is established, the entry will be amended to code O.

## **7. Punctuality and internal truancy**

### **7.1 Late arrival**

Students arriving after 8.30 am must sign in through the academy's agreed entry procedure. Lateness may result in a sanction in accordance with the Behaviour Policy. Persistent lateness will lead to parent contact, review of barriers, support and formal intervention where improvement is not secured.

### **7.2 Internal truancy**

Where a student is absent from a lesson without permission, the teacher will report the absence immediately, staff will take action to locate the student, safeguarding risk will be considered and parents may be contacted. Repeated internal truancy will be addressed through a coordinated attendance, behaviour and safeguarding response.

## **8. Leave of absence during term time**

### **8.1 Exceptional circumstances**

The Headteacher may grant leave of absence during term time only where exceptional circumstances apply. A family holiday, leisure trip or preference for lower-cost travel will not normally constitute exceptional circumstances.

### **8.2 Applications**

Requests must be made by a parent with whom the student normally lives, submitted in writing and in advance, normally at least two weeks before the proposed absence, and include supporting evidence where appropriate. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

### **8.3 Other authorised absence**

Absence may be authorised or recorded under an appropriate statutory code for illness, medical appointments, religious observance, approved educational activity, work experience, approved sport, study leave, suspension,



temporary part-time timetable, occupational travel by a mobile child or other circumstances covered by statutory codes.

## **9. Supporting attendance**

### **9.1 Understanding barriers**

The academy will listen to students and families, identify barriers and agree practical actions. Support may include a named adult, mentoring, SEND assessment, reasonable adjustments, reintegration planning, family support, external agency involvement, transport advice, targeted intervention, an Attendance Improvement Plan or alternative provision where appropriate.

### **9.2 Students with SEND or disabilities**

The academy will maintain high expectations while considering reasonable adjustments, unmet need and the impact of provision. SEND or disability does not automatically mean that absence should be authorised.

### **9.3 Mental and physical health**

Where appropriate, support may include an Individual Healthcare Plan, specialist advice, reasonable adjustments, a phased return or a temporary part-time timetable. A part-time timetable will be used only in exceptional circumstances, for the shortest necessary period, with review dates and a plan to return to full-time education.

### **9.4 Vulnerable students**

The academy will prioritise the attendance of children in care, previously looked-after children, children with a social worker and other students known to safeguarding or family-help services.

## **10. Attendance monitoring**

The academy will monitor overall attendance, authorised and unauthorised absence, persistent and severe absence, punctuality, lesson attendance, year groups, disadvantaged students, SEND, EHCP, children in care, students with a social worker, young carers, alternative provision and other vulnerable groups.

A student is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of possible sessions and severely absent when they miss 50% or more. The academy will not wait for thresholds to be crossed before intervening.

Attendance meetings will focus on evidence, agreed action, named ownership, timescales and impact.

## **11. Attendance improvement process**

The academy will use a graduated response: universal expectations, early support, targeted support, formal intervention and safeguarding escalation. Percentages may inform decisions but will not replace professional judgement.



## **12. Attendance Improvement Plans and notices to improve**

An Attendance Improvement Plan will normally include the concern, barriers identified, student and parent views, support offered, reasonable adjustments, actions, named owners, review dates and possible consequences if improvement is not secured. A formal notice to improve may be issued where support has not worked, has not been engaged with or is not appropriate.

## **13. Legal intervention and penalty notices**

Parents have a legal duty to secure the regular attendance of a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school. The academy will work with families and offer appropriate support before legal intervention where support is appropriate.

A penalty notice may be considered where unauthorised absence meets the national threshold of 10 sessions within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The local authority, rather than the academy, issues penalty notices.

The first penalty notice for the same child within a rolling three-year period is £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days. A second penalty notice within the same rolling three-year period is £160. A third offence will normally lead to consideration of prosecution rather than a further penalty notice.

Other legal interventions may include a parenting contract, Education Supervision Order, School Attendance Order, prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or a Parenting Order imposed by a court.

## **14. Safeguarding and attendance**

Absence can indicate neglect, abuse, exploitation, mental-health difficulty, unmet SEND or medical need, family crisis or risk of becoming missing from education. Sudden changes, repeated unexplained absence or severe absence will be considered within safeguarding arrangements.

### **14.2 Welfare visits**

The academy may undertake a welfare visit where a student is absent without explanation, contact cannot be established, the student is vulnerable, there is concern about safety or the visit forms part of an attendance plan. Visits will have a clear purpose, be risk assessed, recorded and shared with the DSL.

### **14.3 Alternative provision**

Where a student attends alternative provision, the academy remains responsible for safeguarding and monitoring attendance. Attendance reporting arrangements will be agreed with the provider and every unexplained absence followed up promptly.

## **15. Children missing education and removal from roll**

The academy will follow current statutory guidance and local-authority procedures before deleting a student's name from the admission register. A student will not be removed from roll simply because they have stopped attending or their whereabouts are uncertain.



## 16. Communicating attendance information

Parents and carers will be able to access current attendance information through the academy's communication system. The academy will also communicate attendance through direct contact, letters, emails, meetings, reports, parents' evenings and Attendance Improvement Plans.

## 17. Recognition and encouragement

The academy will recognise consistently strong attendance, improved attendance, improved punctuality, engagement with support and individual success where a student has overcome significant barriers. Recognition will be inclusive and will not unfairly penalise students whose absence relates to disability, significant medical need or circumstances outside their control.

## 18. Complaints and policy review

Concerns about the implementation of this policy should initially be raised with the Attendance Manager or senior attendance champion. Formal complaints will be considered under the Trust's Concerns and Complaints Policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, Trust arrangements, local-authority processes or academy systems change.

## Appendix 1: Summary of attendance codes

The academy will use the national attendance codes contained in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the latest statutory attendance guidance. Detailed coding decisions will be made by authorised staff using current statutory guidance rather than this summary alone.

| Code    | Summary                                                    |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| / and \ | Present at the academy                                     |
| L       | Late before the register closes                            |
| U       | Arrived after the register closed                          |
| B       | Approved educational activity                              |
| D       | Dual registered at another school                          |
| K       | Education provision arranged by the local authority        |
| P       | Approved sporting activity                                 |
| V       | Educational visit or trip                                  |
| W       | Work experience                                            |
| C       | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances             |
| C1      | Leave for regulated performance or employment abroad       |
| C2      | Temporary part-time timetable in exceptional circumstances |
| J1      | Approved interview                                         |
| M       | Medical or dental appointment                              |
| S       | Study leave                                                |



|       |                                                                 |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| T     | Parent travelling for occupational purposes                     |
| R     | Religious observance                                            |
| I     | Illness                                                         |
| E     | Suspended or permanently excluded with no alternative provision |
| G     | Holiday not granted                                             |
| N     | Reason for absence not yet established                          |
| O     | Absent in other or unknown circumstances                        |
| Q     | Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements         |
| Y1-Y7 | Unable to attend for specified unavoidable causes               |
| X     | Non-compulsory-school-age student not required to attend        |
| Z     | Prospective student not yet on the admission register           |
| #     | Planned whole-school closure                                    |

### Document Version Control

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