

BROCKHURST & MARLSTON HOUSE SCHOOLS

Including all of the Pre-Prep Department and Early Years Foundation Stage

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Brockhurst & Marlston House Schools (the School) is committed to providing the best possible care and education to its pupils, and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This policy is written with that commitment in mind, and in accordance with KCSIE September 2024.

Reviewed: September 2024

Next Review: September 2025

1. Introduction

At Brockhurst and Marlston House Preparatory School, we believe that regular school attendance is fundamental to our pupils' academic success, well-being, and development. This policy is designed to promote the importance of regular attendance in line with government guidance (*Working together to improve school attendance*, *Keeping children safe in education*, and *Working together to safeguard children*). As an independent school in West Berkshire, we are committed to fostering a supportive environment that encourages regular attendance while addressing any barriers to it.

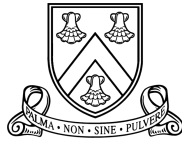
2. Aims

- To promote a culture of high expectations for attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that absences are effectively managed and understood in the context of safeguarding.
- To work in partnership with parents and external agencies to support regular attendance.
- To provide a clear framework for staff, parents, and pupils regarding attendance procedures.

3. Legal Framework

This policy aligns with the following statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- *Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024)*
- *Keeping children safe in education (September 2024)*
- *Working together to safeguard children (December 2023)*



4. School Responsibilities

Brockhurst and Marlston House Preparatory School will:

- Promote the importance of attendance as part of safeguarding and the overall well-being of pupils.
- Ensure registers are completed promptly and accurately, recording both attendance and reasons for absences.
- Communicate regularly with parents about the importance of attendance and ensure early intervention where attendance is a concern.
- Identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and provide support to overcome barriers to regular attendance.
- Report attendance patterns as required by statutory bodies and follow up with local authorities where persistent absenteeism is identified.

5. Parents' Responsibilities

Parents play a key role in ensuring their child attends school regularly. They are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school on time every day, unless there is a valid reason for their absence.
- Inform the school by 8:30 a.m. on the first day of their child's absence, explaining the reason for and expected duration of the absence.
- Avoid scheduling holidays, medical appointments, or other non-urgent commitments during school hours unless absolutely necessary.
- Work collaboratively with the school if attendance becomes a concern and engage with any support offered.

6. Pupil Responsibilities

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and be punctual to lessons.
- Take responsibility for their attendance and inform a trusted adult if they are facing challenges that affect their ability to attend school regularly.

7. Attendance Procedures

- **Morning Registration:** Registration takes place at 8:15-8:30 a.m. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late.
- **Afternoon Registration:** A second registration is taken at 12:30 p.m.
- **Late Arrival:** Pupils arriving after 9:15 a.m. without a valid reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.
- **Absence Reporting:** Parents must notify the school on each day via absence@brockmarl.org of their child's absence and provide an explanation for the absence. The school will follow up any unexplained absences on the same day, starting with a phone call to the primary contact and escalating as necessary.
- **Registration codes:**



Code	Description
/\	Present
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school
C2	Authorised Temporary Absence
D	Dual Registered - at another educational establishment
H	Holiday authorised by the school
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	Interview
L	Late arrival before the register has closed
M	Medical or dental appointments
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
X	Not required to be in school
Y4	Whole School Closed
Z	Student not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure

8. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The school will authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Illness, supported by a note from the parent or a medical professional if required.
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside school hours.
- Religious observances in accordance with the family's faith.
- Exceptional circumstances, such as a family emergency or bereavement, at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences include:

- Absences without explanation or a valid reason.
- Holidays taken during term time without prior approval from the Headteacher.
- Repeated lateness after the register has closed.



9. Monitoring and Managing Attendance

- **First-Day Absence Contact:** If a pupil is absent without notification, the school will attempt to contact the parent by 10:00 a.m. If no contact is made, alternative emergency contacts will be reached. If necessary, a home visit or welfare check may be arranged to ensure the child's safety.
- **Persistent Absence:** Pupils with attendance below 90% are considered persistently absent. The school will work with the family to understand and address any barriers to attendance, offering support such as pastoral care, mentoring, or referral to external agencies. Persistent absence will be closely monitored, and if there is no improvement, the school may involve the local authority education welfare officer.
- **Punctuality Monitoring:** Regular lateness is disruptive to learning and will be addressed with parents. Continued concerns about punctuality may lead to further action, including meetings with the school leadership team to provide targeted support.

10. Safeguarding and Attendance

Attendance is closely linked to safeguarding at Brockhurst and Marlston House. Regular attendance ensures pupils are engaged in learning and safe in a structured environment. Staff are trained to identify patterns of absence that may indicate safeguarding concerns such as neglect, exploitation, or abuse. If a child's absence raises safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will follow the procedures outlined in *Keeping children safe in education* and may make a referral to children's social care or other relevant agencies.

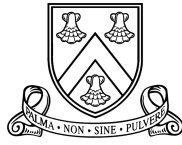
11. Leave of Absence Requests

Parents must submit any requests for leave during term time in writing to the Headteacher. Such requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The decision to grant or refuse leave is at the discretion of the Headteacher, who will consider the individual circumstances, the impact on the child's education, and government guidance.

12. Support for Pupils with Attendance Concerns

The school is committed to providing support for pupils who face challenges with regular attendance. Support may include:

- Meetings with parents to explore underlying causes of absence.
- Access to the school counsellor or other professionals for emotional or mental health support.
- Individualised reintegration plans for pupils returning from extended absences.
- Referral to external agencies, including local authority support services, where necessary.



13. Working with External Agencies

Where there are ongoing attendance concerns that cannot be resolved through in-school support, the school will work with external agencies such as the local authority's education welfare team or children's social care. This may involve:

- Early help assessments to identify and support families facing challenges.
- Referrals to local authority services for further intervention in cases of persistent absenteeism.
- In cases where absences raise safeguarding concerns, the school will collaborate with relevant safeguarding agencies in line with the *Working together to safeguard children* guidance.

14. Legal Action and Penalties

If a pupil's attendance fails to improve despite the school's interventions, parents may be subject to legal action by the local authority. This may include:

- Penalty notices issued for unauthorised absences.
- Court proceedings under the Education Act 1996, which could result in fines, parenting orders, or in extreme cases, imprisonment.

15. Equality and Inclusion

The school recognises that some pupils may face additional barriers to regular attendance, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The school will ensure that all pupils receive the appropriate support to overcome these barriers and that attendance policies are applied fairly and consistently.