



NEW Benthal Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2026

A new policy for a new approach to improve pupil's attendance and punctuality at

Benthal Primary School

The new policy is 20 pages in length. Please ensure you have read the new policy as it will affect you and your child. We have provided an 'At a Glance' cover sheet for you to know the new changes, please refer to the entire policy for all the details. The new policy comes into effect from 1st September 2026.

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. **Benthal's whole school attendance target is 96%.**

The School Attendance Team for Benthal

The team consists of: The Head Teacher- Louise Drew, Assistant Head for Inclusion & Safeguarding- Jill Joseph and Senior Finance & Admin Officer- Abeo Ward

Roles and responsibilities

- **The Governing Board:** Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance
- **The Head Teacher:** The implementation of this policy at the school
- **The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance:** Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- **The Senior Finance & Admin Officer:** Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- **The School Admin Team:** Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on SIMS
- **Class teachers/Staff:** Having high expectations on attendance and punctuality when speaking with children and parents and modeling good attendance and punctuality behaviours
- **Parents and Carers:** Promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children
- **Pupils:** Attend school every day and arrive on time for the start of the day

NEW Absence Procedures

- You **MUST** notify the school of the reason for your child's absence on the first day of an unplanned absence **by 8:30am**, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted on **0208 985 9310**.
- You **WILL** also be **required to send a note** in on the first day that your child returns to school with a **signed explanation** of why they were absent. This is required even if you have already contacted the school. Alternatively, the school office will make arrangements for you to speak to a member of the School Attendance Team.
- Where the absence is longer than 5 days, the school will ask for medical evidence, if we have genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness such as a prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

Arrangements will be made for parents/carers to speak to a Senior Leader if a child's attendance drops **to 95%**.

NEW Medical or Dental appointment procedures

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence only if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment, **not** on the day of the appointment, with evidence of the appointment.

NEW Lateness and Punctuality procedures

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

- After the register has closed at 9.30am the child will be marked as having an unauthorised absence, using the appropriate code. A meeting will be arranged with the School Attendance Team once a fifth unauthorised absence has been recorded due to poor punctuality, in order to discuss the barriers preventing your child from coming to school on time. Please refer to Penalty Notice section of the policy.

NEW Term-time absence

The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed; therefore, the Head Teacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time.

You WILL automatically receive a fixed penalty notice for holidays taken during term time.

Applications for term-time leave of absence MUST be made in advance, at least 4 weeks before the absence and the Head Teacher will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented before authorising term-time leave. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Please refer to the policy for the details.

If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head Teacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as a fixed penalty notice.

Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions –to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis. These include initial meetings with class teachers, formal meetings with the School Attendance Team, agreed Attendance Plans, letters, including a formal Notice to Improve and Issuing of Penalty Notices.

Teamwork between the school and the family is recommended to help support pupils to improve attendance and punctuality.

NEW Issue of a Penalty Notice

The Head Teacher (or a deputy or assistant head teacher, authorised by the Head Teacher), local authority or the police can fine parent/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by informing the local authority to issue a penalty notice.

- You **WILL** automatically receive a fixed penalty notice for holidays taken during term time.
- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence, which includes unauthorised absence due to lateness, in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent/carer must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days, **per child** to the local authority.

Each parent/carer who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/carer who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Please refer to the Penalty Notice section in the policy for further details regarding a second or third penalty notice being issued.

NEW Monitoring and Analysing attendance

The school will monitor and analyse attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

NEW Rewarding good attendance & punctuality

An attendance cup is awarded to the class with the best weekly attendance during Monday Celebration Assembly. The winning class also has 15 minutes extra playtime on a Friday afternoon.

100% attendance certificates and related incentives are awarded half termly (even if a child is unwell, they still have something to work towards later in the year). At the end of the school year, pupils with 100% attendance overall receive book tokens and additional recognition. Parents/carers of children that have 100% are also acknowledged with a certificate each term.

Good Attendance diagram

Attendance Matters					
We have 175 Non-school days a year 175 days to spend on: family time, visits, holiday, shopping, household and other appointments.					
190 SCHOOL DAYS IN EACH YEAR	10 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence	38 days absence	47 days absence
	180 DAYS OF EDUCATION	171 DAYS OF EDUCATION	161 DAYS OF EDUCATION	152 DAYS OF EDUCATION	143 DAYS OF EDUCATION
100%	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%
VERY GOOD		CONCERNING		SERIOUS CONCERN	
Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start.		Less chance of success. Will make progress difficult and reduce your child's level of success.		Your child's progress will be severely impacted. Please ensure that your child attends school every day, wherever possible.	
Chance of achieving good or better outcomes 92%		Chance of achieving good or better outcomes 68%		Chance of achieving good or better outcomes 55%	