



# River Bourne Edge Alternative Provision

## Relationships Policy

**Policy Owner:** Head of Provision

**Approved by:** Senior Leadership Team

**Policy Date:** July 2026

**Review Date:** July 2027

## 1. Policy Statement

The River Bourne Edge believes that good attendance is fundamental to positive educational outcomes, emotional wellbeing and successful preparation for adulthood.

We recognise that many of our students have experienced significant barriers to education, including anxiety, trauma, adverse childhood experiences, special educational needs, mental health difficulties and previous negative experiences of school.

Our approach to attendance is therefore built upon positive relationships, understanding individual circumstances and working collaboratively with students, families, home schools and other professionals to remove barriers to engagement.

We promote high expectations for attendance whilst recognising that sustainable improvement is achieved through encouragement, consistency, support and restorative practice rather than punitive approaches.

Every student has the right to feel safe, welcomed and valued each time they attend The River Bourne Edge.

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## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote regular attendance and punctuality;
  - support students to engage positively with education;
  - identify attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity;
  - work collaboratively with parents, carers and home schools;
  - reduce barriers to attendance through early intervention;
  - ensure attendance procedures comply with current legislation and statutory guidance;
  - recognise attendance as an important safeguarding responsibility.
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## 3. Attendance Ethos

At The River Bourne Edge we understand that attendance is rarely improved through sanctions.

Our practice is based upon a restorative and relational approach that seeks to understand **why** a student is struggling to attend before deciding **how** we can best support them.

We believe that successful attendance is built through:

- trusting relationships;
- consistent routines;
- positive experiences;
- emotional safety;
- effective communication;
- collaborative problem solving;

- celebrating progress as well as achievement.

Where attendance concerns arise, our first response will always be to work alongside students, families and home schools to identify barriers and develop supportive strategies.

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#### **4. Legislation and Guidance**

This policy has been developed in accordance with current legislation and guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Current Edition)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Current Edition)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Department for Education)
- Equality Act 2010
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice

The River Bourne Edge will review this policy whenever there are significant changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

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#### **5. Scope**

This policy applies to all students attending The River Bourne Edge.

As students remain on roll at their commissioning school, attendance is monitored in partnership with the referring school and other professionals where appropriate.

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#### **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **Head of Provision**

The Head of Provision is responsible for ensuring:

- this policy is implemented consistently;
  - attendance is monitored regularly;
  - attendance concerns are addressed promptly;
  - appropriate safeguarding action is taken where attendance raises concerns;
  - effective partnership working with commissioning schools and families.
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## **Staff**

All staff are responsible for:

- welcoming students positively each day;
- accurately recording attendance;
- recognising patterns of absence;
- reporting attendance concerns promptly;
- supporting students to re-engage positively following absence;
- maintaining positive relationships with families.

Staff understand that every absence may have an underlying reason and will seek to understand concerns before making assumptions.

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## **Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers are expected to:

- encourage regular attendance;
  - notify The River Bourne Edge as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend;
  - work in partnership with staff to address attendance concerns;
  - attend meetings where additional support is required.
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## **Students**

Students are encouraged to:

- attend regularly and arrive on time;
  - communicate honestly if they are finding attendance difficult;
  - work with staff to overcome barriers;
  - take pride in improving their attendance.
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## **Commissioning Schools**

The River Bourne Edge works closely with commissioning schools to:

- monitor attendance;
  - share attendance information;
  - identify emerging concerns;
  - coordinate support;
  - ensure statutory attendance responsibilities are fulfilled.
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## 7. Recording Attendance

Attendance is recorded accurately at the beginning of every session.

Attendance records are maintained in accordance with current Department for Education requirements and provide an accurate record of each student's attendance.

Registers are completed:

- Morning session – **9:00am**
- Afternoon session – **12:00pm**
- Afternoon learning session – **1:00pm**

Any amendments to attendance records will clearly identify:

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment;
- the date of amendment;
- the member of staff making the amendment.

Attendance records are stored securely and managed in accordance with The River Bourne Edge Data Protection Policy.

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## 8. Attendance Codes

The River Bourne Edge records attendance using the current Department for Education attendance codes.

Registers are completed in accordance with the latest statutory guidance and attendance coding requirements.

Attendance codes are reviewed whenever Department for Education guidance changes to ensure continued compliance.

## 9. Reporting an Absence

If a student is unable to attend, parents or carers should notify The River Bourne Edge by telephone or email as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

Where possible, parents and carers should provide:

- the reason for the absence;
- the expected date of return;
- any relevant information that may help staff support the student's return.

If no reason for absence has been received, staff will make reasonable attempts to contact parents or carers to establish the student's whereabouts and wellbeing.

Where appropriate, attendance information will also be shared with the commissioning school.

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## **10. Planned Absence**

Where possible, appointments should be arranged outside of provision hours.

Where this is not possible, parents or carers should notify The River Bourne Edge in advance.

Examples of authorised planned absence may include:

- medical appointments;
- dental appointments;
- hospital appointments;
- exceptional family circumstances agreed in advance.

Students should attend for as much of the session as reasonably possible before or after appointments.

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## **11. Lateness and Punctuality**

Punctuality helps students establish routines and make a positive start to their day.

Students arriving after the start of a session will be recorded using the appropriate attendance code.

Where lateness becomes a pattern, staff will work with students, parents, carers and commissioning schools to understand the reasons and identify supportive solutions.

Transport difficulties, anxiety, medical needs or other individual circumstances will always be considered before any decisions are made.

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## **12. Responding to Attendance Concerns**

The River Bourne Edge believes that attendance concerns should be addressed early through supportive, restorative conversations.

Where attendance begins to decline, staff will seek to understand the reasons rather than making assumptions.

Support may include:

- conversations with the student;
- discussions with parents or carers;
- liaison with the commissioning school;
- wellbeing check-ins;
- review of transport arrangements;
- timetable adjustments where appropriate;
- phased reintegration;

- additional pastoral support;
- referrals to other professionals where appropriate.

The aim is to remove barriers to learning and help students re-engage successfully.

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### **13. Persistent Absence**

Where attendance falls below expected levels or a pattern of absence emerges, The River Bourne Edge will work proactively with all relevant professionals.

This may include:

- reviewing attendance data;
- identifying barriers to attendance;
- arranging review meetings;
- agreeing supportive attendance targets;
- reviewing the student's timetable where appropriate;
- considering additional emotional wellbeing support.

As students remain on roll at their commissioning school, attendance concerns will be discussed jointly to ensure appropriate action is taken.

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### **14. Attendance and Safeguarding**

Attendance is an important safeguarding responsibility.

Repeated absence, sudden changes in attendance or unexplained absence may indicate that a student requires additional support or may be experiencing safeguarding concerns.

Where attendance raises safeguarding concerns, staff will follow The River Bourne Edge's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy without delay.

Where appropriate, safeguarding concerns may be shared with:

- commissioning schools;
- Children's Social Care;
- the Education Welfare Service;
- other relevant professionals.

The safety and wellbeing of the student will always remain our primary consideration.

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### **15. Working in Partnership**

Improving attendance is a shared responsibility.

The River Bourne Edge values strong partnerships with:

- students;
- parents and carers;
- commissioning schools;
- social workers;
- Virtual Schools;
- health professionals;
- local authorities;
- other agencies supporting the young person.

Regular communication helps ensure that attendance concerns are identified early and that appropriate support is provided.

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## **16. Monitoring Attendance**

Attendance information is monitored regularly by senior leaders.

Monitoring enables The River Bourne Edge to:

- identify patterns of absence;
- monitor punctuality;
- identify persistent absence;
- recognise safeguarding concerns;
- evaluate the effectiveness of interventions;
- support continuous improvement.

Attendance may also be discussed during:

- Annual Reviews;
  - EHCP Reviews;
  - Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings;
  - Child in Need meetings;
  - Child Protection meetings;
  - Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings;
  - multi-agency reviews.
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## **17. Promoting Positive Attendance**

The River Bourne Edge believes that recognising success is an important part of encouraging attendance.

Positive attendance may be recognised through:

- verbal praise;
- positive phone calls or messages home;
- certificates or awards;
- celebration of improved attendance;
- recognition during student meetings;
- reward systems appropriate to individual students.

We recognise that, for some students, improving attendance is a significant personal achievement and celebrate progress as well as high attendance.

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## **18. Related Policies**

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
  - Behaviour Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
  - SEND Policy
  - Child Missing Education Policy
  - Data Protection Policy
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## **19. Equality Statement**

The River Bourne Edge is committed to ensuring that attendance procedures are applied fairly, consistently and without discrimination.

We recognise that some students face additional barriers to attendance because of disability, special educational needs, medical conditions, mental health needs or family circumstances.

Reasonable adjustments and individualised support will always be considered to help students access education successfully.

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## **20. Policy Summary**

At The River Bourne Edge we believe that every day of education matters, but we also understand that good attendance is built through trust, positive relationships and meaningful support.

Our restorative and trauma-informed approach encourages students to engage with education by helping them feel safe, valued and understood.

By working collaboratively with students, families, commissioning schools and partner agencies, we aim to remove barriers to attendance and ensure that every young person has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

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