

MIAG



ATTENDANCE POLICY

MIAG PROVISION SPECIFIC
The Beeches

Supporting consistent, effective practice across MIAG provision.

Policy Statement:

MIAG recognises that regular attendance is fundamental to safeguarding, wellbeing, learning and positive outcomes. Learners can only benefit fully from the opportunities provided by the school when they attend regularly and on time.

MIAG is committed to promoting strong attendance through clear expectations, positive relationships with families and personalised support for learners who experience barriers to attendance. Many learners at The Beeches have experienced significant barriers to education, including SEND and social, emotional and mental health needs. Our approach therefore combines high expectations with relational, trauma-informed and individualised support.

Attendance is not simply a measure of presence. It is an important indicator of whether a learner is able to access education, feel safe and included, make progress and benefit from the wider opportunities available at MIAG.

Purpose and Aims:

This policy aims to:

- ❖ promote regular attendance and good punctuality;
- ❖ identify emerging attendance concerns early and respond proportionately;
- ❖ understand and address barriers that may prevent a learner attending;
- ❖ work positively with parents, carers, learners and relevant professionals;
- ❖ maintain accurate, timely and legally compliant attendance records;
- ❖ ensure attendance practice supports safeguarding and learner welfare;
- ❖ provide appropriate support for learners with SEND, health needs and other vulnerabilities; and
- ❖ use attendance information as part of school self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement.

Legislative and Guidance Framework:

This policy is informed by and will be implemented in accordance with the current statutory and regulatory framework, including:

- ❖ Education Act 1996;
- ❖ School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- ❖ Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended;
- ❖ Working together to improve school attendance – DfE statutory guidance, July 2026;
- ❖ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, from 1 September 2026;
- ❖ Children Missing Education – statutory guidance for local authorities and schools;
- ❖ Equality Act 2010; and

- ❖ relevant guidance concerning children with SEND, health needs and mental health.

The July 2026 DFE's Working together to improve school attendance guidance is statutory and applies to independent schools. MIAG will keep this policy under review when legislation or statutory guidance changes.

MIAG's Approach to Attendance:

MIAG has high aspirations for attendance while recognising that the reasons behind absence are individual. We will not assume that poor attendance is simply a matter of choice or parental compliance. We will seek to understand what is happening for the learner and family, identify barriers and take appropriate action.

- ❖ High expectations – regular attendance matters and every learner should be supported to access their full educational entitlement
- ❖ Early identification – emerging patterns are noticed and acted upon before attendance becomes entrenched
- ❖ Understand and remove barriers – SEND, SEMH, health, family circumstances, transport, anxiety and other factors are considered
- ❖ Support before escalation – where appropriate, MIAG works with the learner and family to identify practical solutions before formal intervention
- ❖ Safeguarding and accountability – unexplained or concerning absence is followed up promptly and attendance information is used to inform leadership, governance and improvement

Expectations:

MIAG is a full-time independent special school. Learners are expected to attend every school day unless there is a valid reason for absence or an agreed arrangement is in place.

Learners are expected to:

- ❖ attend school every day they are required to attend;
- ❖ arrive on time and be ready to learn;
- ❖ follow agreed attendance or reintegration arrangements; and
- ❖ talk to a trusted adult if something is making attendance difficult.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ❖ ensure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time;
- ❖ contact MIAG as soon as possible, and preferably before the start of the school day, if their child is unable to attend;

- ❖ provide the reason for absence and relevant information that may help MIAG understand the circumstances;
- ❖ work with MIAG when attendance concerns arise; and
- ❖ seek support promptly where barriers to attendance are emerging.

Registration and Attendance Recording:

MIAG will maintain an electronic attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the DfE statutory guidance.

- ❖ The attendance register will be taken at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session.
- ❖ The register will be taken at the same time for all learners registered at the school.
- ❖ Each session's register will remain open for no longer than 30 minutes.
- ❖ The appropriate national attendance or absence code will be recorded for each learner.
- ❖ Attendance and admission registers are legal records. MIAG will retain entries for the period required by statutory guidance, currently six years from the date the entry was made.
- ❖ Where an attendance record needs to be amended, the original entry, amended entry, reason, date of amendment and person making the amendment will be retained as required.

The exact registration times will be published to families as part of the school's normal attendance information and may be updated where the structure of the school day changes.

Punctuality:

Punctuality is part of good attendance. Learners arriving after the start of a registration session but before the register closes will be recorded using the appropriate late code. Arrival after the register has closed will normally be recorded using the appropriate absence code unless another statutory code applies.

MIAG recognises that persistent lateness may be a sign that a learner or family needs support. Patterns of lateness will therefore be considered alongside the wider attendance picture rather than treated solely as a disciplinary issue.

Absence:

Parents and carers should notify MIAG promptly when a learner is unable to attend. MIAG will record absence using the appropriate national attendance code and will seek to establish the reason for any unexplained absence.

Authorised absence

Absence may be authorised where there is a valid reason and the appropriate national attendance code applies. Examples may include illness, medical appointments, religious observance, approved educational activity and exceptional circumstances. MIAG will consider individual circumstances and may seek appropriate information where necessary.

Unauthorised absence

Absence may be recorded as unauthorised where no satisfactory reason is provided, where the reason does not meet the relevant criteria for authorised absence, or where leave has not been granted. A learner's reluctance or refusal to attend will not, by itself, end the school's responsibility to understand and address the underlying barrier.

Leave of Absence and Term-Time Leave:

MIAG will consider requests for leave of absence individually and in accordance with the DfE statutory attendance guidance. Leave should normally only be granted where the circumstances justify it, and the school has exercised its discretion appropriately.

Term-time holidays will not normally be authorised. Parents and carers should request leave in advance and provide the circumstances supporting the request. MIAG will consider the individual facts, including the learner's attendance history and any relevant SEND, health, safeguarding or family circumstances.

Where statutory or local authority processes may apply, MIAG will work with the relevant local authority. MIAG will not use a blanket approach where individual circumstances require professional judgement.

Understanding and Supporting Barriers to Attendance:

Barriers may include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ school-related anxiety or difficulty with transitions;
- ❖ SEMH needs, trauma or other emotional wellbeing needs;
- ❖ neurodiversity and unmet or changing SEND needs;
- ❖ physical or mental health needs;
- ❖ bullying, relationships or feeling unsafe;
- ❖ family circumstances or caring responsibilities;
- ❖ transport difficulties;
- ❖ attendance patterns linked to particular lessons, times or environments; and
- ❖ other circumstances identified through discussion with the learner and family.

Depending on individual need, support may include:

- ❖ a named trusted adult or key worker;
- ❖ a planned reintegration arrangement;
- ❖ a temporary and agreed part-time timetable where this is exceptionally necessary and lawful;
- ❖ adjustments to arrival arrangements or the start of the day;
- ❖ pastoral or wellbeing support;
- ❖ adaptations to learning or the school environment;
- ❖ multi-agency support; and
- ❖ regular review with the learner and family.

Any temporary part-time timetable will be used only in exceptional circumstances, with the agreement of the school and the parent/carer the learner normally lives with, for the shortest time necessary and as part of a clear plan towards full-time education. It will not be used as a long-term response to behaviour.

Responding to Attendance Concerns:

MIAG uses a graduated and proportionate response. The exact response will depend on the individual circumstances and may move between stages or involve more than one form of support.

Stage	Focus	Possible actions
1 – Understand and support	Early concern or emerging pattern	Review attendance; speak with learner/family; understand barriers; agree practical support.
2 – Targeted attendance support	Concern persists or attendance is deteriorating	Attendance meeting; agreed actions; attendance improvement plan where appropriate; regular review.
3 – Formal / multi-agency response	Persistent or severe absence, significant concern or support not effective	Escalated leadership oversight; involvement of relevant professionals and/or local authority; formal action where appropriate.

Persistent and Severe Absence:

MIAG will use national definitions when analysing attendance. Persistent absence is where a learner misses 10% or more of their possible sessions. Severe absence is where a learner misses 50% or more of their possible sessions.

These definitions support consistent analysis but do not replace professional judgement. MIAG will also consider patterns, reasons for absence, individual circumstances, safeguarding concerns, SEND and the effectiveness of support.

Safeguarding and Attendance:

Attendance is an important safeguarding indicator. Unexplained, prolonged or changing patterns of absence may indicate that a learner is experiencing harm, exploitation, neglect, mental health difficulties or another vulnerability.

Where attendance information raises a safeguarding concern, staff will follow the MIAG Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report concerns to the DSL. Actions may include welfare contact, discussion with professionals, information sharing or safeguarding referral.

The school will follow up unexplained absence promptly and will take appropriate action where a learner cannot be accounted for or where there are concerns about their welfare.

SEND, Health and Inclusion:

MIAG will consider attendance within the context of each learner's SEND, EHCP, health needs and individual circumstances. Where attendance difficulties indicate that provision, support or reasonable adjustments may need to change, this will be considered through the appropriate school processes and, where relevant, with the local authority and other professionals.

Attendance will be considered alongside inclusion, behaviour, safeguarding and progress rather than in isolation.

Children Missing from Education:

If a learner's whereabouts or educational placement becomes unclear, MIAG will follow the relevant Children Missing Education statutory guidance and work with the local authority and other agencies as appropriate. A learner will not be removed from the admission register simply because they are absent without following the statutory requirements for deletion.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role	Responsibility
Proprietor /COO/ Governing Body	Provides appropriate oversight and challenge regarding attendance and holds leaders to account for effective attendance arrangements.
Headteacher	Has overall responsibility for attendance, ensures statutory requirements are met, monitors attendance and ensures appropriate support and action.
Pastoral Lead	Monitors attendance routinely, follows up concerns, coordinates support and maintains appropriate records.
DSL	Considers attendance-related safeguarding concerns and ensures appropriate safeguarding action.
Office Administrative Staff	First Day Calls; Non-Attendance Follow-Ups; Ensuring accurate recording
Teachers	Management of First Stage Response including initial discussions with family and relevant professionals
All staff	Record attendance accurately when required, notice emerging concerns and share relevant information promptly.
Learners	Attend regularly, arrive on time and speak to a trusted adult when barriers to attendance arise.
Parents / carers	Ensure regular attendance, communicate absence promptly and work with MIAG to address barriers.

Support for Families:

We recognise that attendance can sometimes prove challenging for families, you are not alone and alongside the support that we are able to offer at MIAG, there are a number of other services that can offer free support.

Organisation:	How they can help:	Contact Details:
Local Authority Attendance Support Team	Local Authorities have a statutory duty in supporting families where attendance is a concern.	Contact details vary by Local Authority (based on home address) BANES - Local Offer Bath and North East Somerset Council

		Bristol City Council - SEND Local Offer North Somerset Council - SEND Hub (Local Offer) North Somerset Council
Family Lives	Free confidential support for parents and carers, including attendance and behaviour	Tel: 0808 800 2222 Email: askus@familylives.org.uk Web: Family Lives
Contact for Families	Specialist advice for families of children and young people with additional needs	Tel: 0808 808 3555 Email: helpline@contact.org.uk Web: Contact
Gov.uk – School Attendance Support	Government information for parents on attendance	Web: GOV.UK – School attendance and absence

Monitoring, Evaluation and Improvement:

Attendance information will be reviewed at individual learner, group and whole-school level. Leaders will consider patterns and trends, including persistent and severe absence, punctuality, groups of learners and the effectiveness of interventions.

Attendance information will contribute to school self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement. The focus will be not simply on whether attendance has been recorded or an intervention completed, but on whether barriers have been understood, support has been effective and attendance and outcomes are improving.

Attendance will be reported through the school's normal leadership and governance arrangements. The level and frequency of reporting will remain proportionate to the size and needs of the school.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, school arrangements or identified learning from practice. Feedback from learners, families and staff may inform future revisions.

Document Control:

This policy forms part of the MIAG Policy Framework and should be read alongside the MIAG Organisational Excellence Framework and relevant MIAG strategies.

Policy		Attendance Policy
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Provision		The Beeches
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1.0	Final	Updated for July 2026 DfE attendance guidance and MIAG policy framework.

MIAG — Meeting Individual Aspirations & Goals