

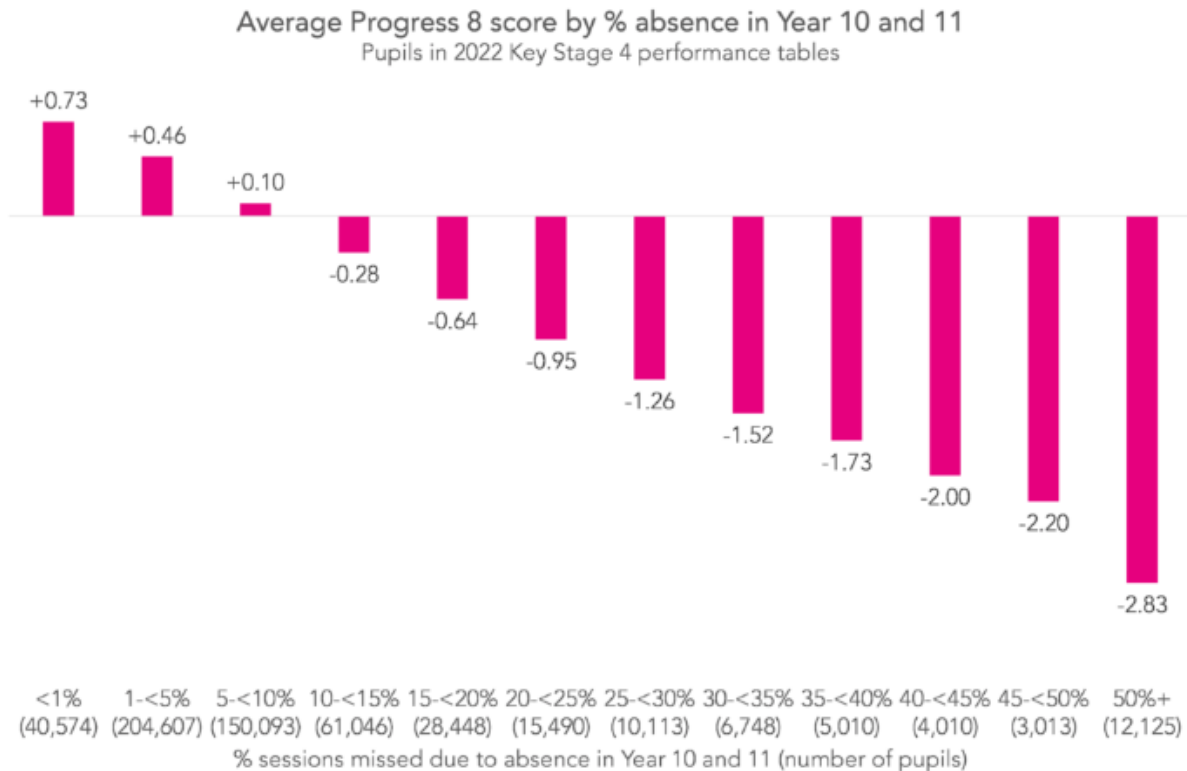


October 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

## Re: Changes to Attendance for All Schools

Attendance to school is one of the most significant factors that contribute to the academic success of students. Research and studies have long established the undeniable links between attendance in school and successful outcomes. Brentside is no different. Attendance in school and attending lessons leads to successful progress. The graph below shows the impact of student absence from school on results nationally. It shows that the positive impact of students attending school and the negative impact increases with the greater level of absence.



Brentside and all its staff are committed to getting all children into school. For many students this is very straight forward and uncomplicated. We understand and appreciate for other students with challenges, whether it be medical or mental health, this is more complex.

New legislation around which schools must operate and perform has changed. There are now very clear national guidelines that schools must follow. The main changes have been highlighted below.

- Absence fines charged to parents will rise from **£60 to £80**, or **£160 if not paid within 21 days**. Brentside will decide whether to issue fines, but councils administer them.

- Only **two fines** can be issued to the **same parent** for the **same child** within a **three-year** rolling period. The **second notice** will automatically be charged at **£160**.
- **Both parents can be fined** for the same child separately (that equals **4 fines** in total).
- New “**notices to improve**” will also be the “**final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued**”.
- Brentside can also consider a fine if a pupil **misses 10 sessions** (half days) of unauthorised absence in a **rolling period of 10 school weeks**. **All circumstances will be considered before a decision is made**.
- The period of **10 weeks** can also span “**different terms or school years**”.
- The threshold can be met with “**any combination of unauthorised absence**”. For example, **4 sessions in term time plus 6 instances of arriving late** (after the registration has closed – **U**) or being marked absent in school while truanting.
- Arriving late to get a ‘**U**’ mark on the register is any time **after 09:15**.
- Ealing council “retains the discretion to issue a fine before the threshold is met”. This could include where parents “are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events”.

Brentside is committed to supporting students and families to attend school each day and there are various strategies we have in place to support this.

Attendance of all students is tracked weekly and form tutors, SAFE workers, Year Leaders and other staff track attendance, speak to students, email and call families. We will communicate clearly when a student is falling into the threshold for a fine and we will give very clear guidelines for how that student can improve. Families should be clear that lateness beyond 09:15 counts as a session missed. Only 10 missed sessions (equal to five days, or ten half days) are permissible every 10 weeks. This means student attendance is less than 90%. This is equal to half a missed year of school, if this pattern is repeated from Year 7-11.

Missing one of the 10 sessions is also possible with absence to lessons within school. Should a student truant a lesson and therefore not be marked present on time, despite being on the school site, this would count as a session missed. Attendance to school means attendance to lessons. Continued failure to improve attendance can result in an Education Supervision Order which would likely precede a possible court appearance and the consequences that follow. Brentside will communicate clearly at every step to ensure that families are aware of all possible outcomes from the choices made.

Moving forward, you can expect to be notified by email if your child arrives late for school. If you receive such an email, please discuss this with your child and support them to be on time every day.

It is vital we reach all families in our community. If you would like a translation of this letter, please notify the school. Email [info@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:info@brentsidehigh.ealing.sch.uk) and we will endeavour to facilitate a translation of the letter.

We look forward to your continued support.

Yours faithfully,



Mr Duffy  
Deputy Headteacher