

# Attendance Policy



## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance by:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The Designated Safeguarding Governor will monitor and review school attendance.

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Paul Douglass - Headteacher. Please contact the school office or email – [office@sandalprimaryschool.co.uk](mailto:office@sandalprimaryschool.co.uk)

### **3.3 Welfare & Inclusion Officer**

The: Welfare & Inclusion Officer

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **3.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **3.5 School admin staff**

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school

### **3.6 Parents**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides who is most appropriate to work with including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.7 Pupil**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day, on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day. (Doors are opened at 8.40am and children are expected to be in class for 8.50am)

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Absences can be reported through the School Gateway app, email to the office and on the absence message on the phone line.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

If children are leaving early for a medical appointment, the office MUST see the appointment letter / email correspondence.

If children are leaving early for a holiday / weekend away / any other reason, the parent must complete a leave of absence form (even if it is only 30 mins early etc.) If parents have not completed a form prior to departure, they will be asked to do so.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

The school doors open at 8.40am each day and close at 8.50am. Any child arriving after this time must go through the office

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Minutes late are recorded and monitored; targets will be set with individual children and families as appropriate.

The Attendance Officer monitors late arrivals and if a pattern of lateness is seen then contact is made with the parent/carer. Support can be arranged over a temporary period in getting a pupil to school.

#### **4.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary to identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

### **5: Authorised and Unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as something unavoidable or unrepeatable. e.g a close family funeral with distance to travel; a parents wedding, fixed shift patterns and armed forces.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller

family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

- Requests for Flexi-schooling will not be granted without good reason and support from other professionals.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance therefore it is unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday. Absences due to holidays, taken during term time can seriously impact on a child's academic attainment.

If you wish for your child to be absent from school, please request a 'leave of absence form' from the school office and return it to school at least 7 days before the intended absence (see Appendix 2). This should contain the details of both parents where appropriate. A leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively.

## **5.2 Reducing persistent absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider and address any potential safeguarding issues
- Hold regular meeting with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement
  - Listen and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
  - Provide access to wider support services where relevant.
  - Consider alternative support that could be put in place
  - Implement sanctions where necessary
- Through attendance monitoring, persistent absentees will be targeted through home visits, phone calls and letters home, target setting, closer monitoring and involvement of Education Social Care.

## **5.3 Penalty notices**

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

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

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

#### **5.4 Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support

#### **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

We promote, incentivise and celebrate good attendance through

- Rewards of stickers, badges and certificates
- Termly Attendance Newsletter
- Bespoke system of soft start/end of day to encourage better attendance.

#### **7. Attendance monitoring**

The Welfare & Inclusion Co-ordinator at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school on the first morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

After the first absence report we ask that school be kept informed on continued absence and expected return

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is

published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **7.1 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.2 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider and address any potential safeguarding issues
- Hold regular meeting with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement
  - Listen and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services where relevant.
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place
- Implement sanctions where necessary

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by The Welfare & Inclusion Co-ordinator and Designated Safeguarding Governor. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: DfE Attendance Codes

Appendix 2: Application for Leave of Absence

<b>Reviewed by: Full Governing Body</b>	Date: 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Approved by: Full Governing Body</b>	Date: 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Next review due by: Autumn 2026</b>	

## Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>J1</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence

<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

**Appendix 2 – Application for leave of absence**



**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

Name of School ..... Date of Request .....

Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child’s educational progress. Bradford Council expects all parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Absences due to holidays, taken during term time can seriously impact on a pupil’s academic attainment. Bradford Council’s policy is to only grant leave of absence in the most exceptional circumstances. If permission is given for Leave of Absence the Headteacher will determine the number of days of absence.

**Taking ‘Leave of Absence’ without the school’s permission could result in you being issued with a Penalty Notice fine of £60. Penalty Notices are issued, per parent per child. Where permission has been given for ‘Leave of Absence’, if you fail to return your child within 10 schools days of the agreed return date, your child may be removed from the school roll.**

If you wish to apply for your child to be absent from school, please complete this form and return it to school at least two weeks before the intended departure. Thank you.

**PARENTS SECTION**

Surname of child		First name	
Date of birth		Class	
Surname of parent/guardian		First name of parent/guardian	
Address of child			
Postcode		Telephone number	
Reason for absence			
Length of absence applied for (number of school days)		Destination	
Date of departure		Date due back in school	
Emergency telephone contact in the Bradford district	Emergency telephone contact abroad		
Parent’s/guardian’s signature			Date

**SCHOOLS SECTION**

Date of meeting with parent/s		Headteacher’s signature		Date
Leave of Absence	Approved for		School days	
	Not approved for		School days	
Reason for refusing Leave of Absence				

**Please Retain for School Records**

**In the event of the child not returning within 10 schools days of the agreed return date and no satisfactory explanation has been provide for the none return the child can be removed from the school register. A Children Missing Education referral should be made to the Education Social Work Service who will require a copy of this form. For further information please see Bradford Council Leave of Absence, Holidays in Term Time and Extended Leave of Absence – Guidance for Schools or Children Missing Education ‘If A Child Goes Missing’.**