



**Grange
Academy**
Belong • Believe • Achieve



**Bedford Inclusive Learning
and Training Trust**
Achieving • Believing • Collaborating

Attendance Policy - Grange

Policy Status: Other

Review Cycle: 2 Years

Owner: Mel Wooding

Date: September 2022

Approved by: Trust Board

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Review Date: September 2024

Aims

At BILTT, we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take full advantage of all the learning opportunities that we have to offer and achieve to their full potential. In order to do this, all pupils must attend school on every occasion when they are expected to be in. This attendance policy sets out what is expected so that this may be achieved.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

BILTT encourages good attendance through making pupils feel valued, welcome, safe and secure whilst in school. It is important that the school builds sound relationships with parents and communicates any concerns as they arise. We also acknowledge that some pupils have medical needs which prevent them from achieving 100% attendance and aim to ensure that these families feel supported in achieving the highest percentage possible in this context. BILTT considers the Local Authority's average attendance rate when considering whether action is required or not regarding low attendance.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Rachel Timms and can be contacted via email addresses as follows. Rachel.timms@bilft.org

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analyzing attendance data
- 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
- Advising the Headteacher (authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Hannah Langsman and can be contacted via email addresses as follows. Hannah.Langsman@bilft.org

Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9:10 each morning.

School admin/office staff

School admin/office staff will:

- Take calls from parents and pupils about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents and pupils to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am 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

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time

Recording attendance

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

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 also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorized or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 at the latest on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50 and will be kept open until 9:10. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:10.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify school by 9am on the first day of their child's absence, explaining the reason and, if possible, indicating when the child may return. Such messages may be received by phone, note or email to the school office. Parents are expected to maintain contact with school and keep the school updated during any period of absence.

If no message is received, the office will make a phone call to the parent/carer to find out the reason for the absence and date of expected return. This will be recorded on the pupil file. We will mark absence due to illness as authorized 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 unauthorized and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorized 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.

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 authorize.

Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to be in school by 8:50 at the latest when the register is taken each morning.

- registers will remain open until 9:10 each morning and 1:10 each afternoon, however, if the pupil arrives to school after 8:50 but before 9:20 they will be marked as **late**.
- pupils that are transported via the local Authority transport who arrive after the attendance registers have been called but before they are closed, should be marked with an L code (provided parents/carers have notified the school with a reason) This means present but late for the session, and does not count as an unauthorized absence. If it is not their fault that the bus is late, they should be marked as present once they arrived.
- pupils that are transported via their parents who arrive after 8:50 after the attendance registers have been called but before they are closed, should be marked with an L code (provided parents/carers have notified the school with a reason) This means present but late for the session, and does not count as an unauthorized absence
- pupils who arrive after the registers have been closed at 9:10 and 1:10 should be marked with the U code ("Late and arrived after the register closed"), which counts as an unauthorized absence. This will not be unauthorized if the family have notified the school regarding the reason
- registers are kept open until 9:10 because the majority of pupils use home to school transport and may have relatively long journeys. Traffic problems, medical issues, behavior concerns or other unforeseeable incidents can delay transport. Lateness because of transport and, therefore, beyond the control of the pupil or parent will be acknowledged as such

Dental and Medical Appointments

Parents are expected to notify school in advance of such appointments. Where a child requires an operation or other prolonged hospital stay, school will work with the family and health services as required; for example, we could facilitate a phased return to school where this is advisable. As the law states that every child is entitled to a full education, including those children affected by a medical condition, BILTT may seek educational support for a child from the Hospital Education Team during their period of recovery or long-term illness.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact Early Help, Social Care or the Police if we are concerned regarding the absence.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half regular contact session from Form Tutors, reports or parent evenings.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Exceptional circumstances may include;

- the need for a family to spend time together during or after a crisis, and for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking leave outside term time, if the leave will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education
- other circumstances which would be at the discretion of the Headteacher

Note: The Headteacher can only authorize leave of absence where it has been requested in advance. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or paper copy by request from the office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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
- Traveler pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travelers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travelers. Absence may be authorized only when a traveler 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
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may grant term-time holiday
- Study leave
- Flexi schooling requests and personalized timetables

Children Missing from Education

Read [Children Missing From Education, DfE 2016](#) for full details on school responsibilities and duties
All children over the age of 5 must be in full time education

The Local Authority will be informed of any child who has been missing from school without a valid reason for 5 days or more or of any child who fails to attend regularly.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Share any key cases attendance concern cases with the DSL

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.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence (see appendix 2)

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
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Refer to Education Welfare Services if the above doesn't improve the attendance

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of annually by Mel Wooding, Head of Safeguarding. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies and documents

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy 2022
- Behaviour policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

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	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: attendance concerns flow chart

