

# Attendance Guidance

Academic Year 2022-2025



## **Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Proactively manage and improve attendance across the school community
- Working with pupils and parents/carers to remove any barriers to attendance and punctuality by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place

## **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 Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance May 2022/September 2022](#)

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

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies**

The Trust Board and the Local Governing Bodies are 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. They will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Trust's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it the most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools

### **School's role in the monitoring of pupil attendance includes:**

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents.
- Attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent attendance support is provided for pupils who require it most by prioritising the staff and resources needed.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils.
- Repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve.
- Identify and monitor attendance patterns across the school.
- Record attendance accurately in the register.
- Work effectively with local partners to help remove the barriers to attendance that go beyond the school gates.
- Training on attendance is included in the schools' continued professional development offer for all staff.
- Dedicated attendance training is provided to staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this guidance 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

### **Designated Senior Leader**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance in school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Overseeing attendance data analysis
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents/carers

At Bowes Primary school the Headteacher is supported in the strategic monitoring of attendance by the Senior Leadership Team and Attendance Officer.

### **Attendance Officer**

The school Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader
- Works with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

At Bowes Primary School the Attendance Officer is Tina Solari. For any matter related to attendance they can be contacted via the school office ([office@bowesprimary.org](mailto:office@bowesprimary.org)) or by phone (02083682552 Option 1).

### **School Office Staff**

School office staff take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school management information system.

### **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.

### **Recording Attendance**

#### **Attendance Register**

Each school will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. Each school will take an 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.

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

The school gates open at 8.40am and children are able to access their classrooms at this time. Registers are taken at 8.55am and kept open until 9.10am. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken will be marked as late (L) and pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked as absent (U).

At Bowes school the afternoon sessions start at 12:45pm and registers are not kept open.

### **Unplanned Absence**

Each school marks 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.

At Bowes school the pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:50am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parent must contact the school via the school office ([office@bowesprimary.org](mailto:office@bowesprimary.org)) or by phone (02083682552 Option 1).

### **Planned Absence**

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

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.

Pupil's parent/carers must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. (Section 5: Term-time absences the school can authorise)

At Bowes Primary School we ask all parents/carers to inform the school in writing of their child's absence via the school office email address ([office@bowesprimary.org](mailto:office@bowesprimary.org)). Parents are also required to share proof of appointment with the school. This can be handed into the school office or sent as an attachment to the office email.

### **Lateness and Punctuality**

All pupils should arrive at school on time, ready for learning.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the code L
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the code U

At Bowes Primary school our procedures for monitoring and responding to lateness are to contact parents either via phone call or text message (dependant on the circumstances) if their child is marked as L on the register. Persistent lateness will be followed up by the Headteacher.

### **Following Up Absence**

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

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

At Bowes Primary we will contact parents either via phone call or text message (dependant on the circumstances).

### **Reporting to Parents/Carers**

Each school reports to parents/carers on their child's attendance record annually in the written end-of-year report.

Where there are concerns about a child's attendance, each school has their own reporting procedure. At Bowes Primary School we will initially contact parents by phone to discuss any concerns regarding their child/ren's attendance in school. This will be followed by a letter from the headteacher, if the child's attendance does not improve. The school will work in partnership with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and the family in order to implement support/change. For persistently absent children (attendance below 90%), the EWO will contact the parent directly to introduce themselves and to offer support/advise and arrange a meeting if necessary.

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

### Approval for Term-Time Absence

Headteachers 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.

Each 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/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm the day/s requested are "set apart" for religious observance
- 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

### Reducing Persistent Absence

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 and the school will put in support arrangements to address this as a matter of urgency.

At Bowes Primary School our procedures for targeting unauthorised absence include meetings facilitated with the Attendance Officer, Headteacher, EWO and the parents.

They will also receive formal warning letters where necessary and will be closely monitored by the class teacher and Attendance Officer.

### Legal Sanctions

Where there are unresolved attendance concerns, our schools may issue a penalty notice, following the Enfield Local Authority framework '[Code of Conduct for Issuing Education & Exclusion Related Penalty Notices January 2015](#)' and the Department for Education's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice includes consideration of:

- 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 issued with a penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Each school has a comprehensive range of strategies to promote good attendance, referring to strategies contained in the guidance from the [Department for Education](#).

### **Attendance Monitoring**

Each school monitors pupil absence regularly and thoroughly in order to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those pupils identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. Schools will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Trust Board and Local Education Committee.

At Bowes Primary School, this data is monitored by the Attendance Officer in partnership with the Headteacher.

### **Links with Other Policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

## 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
<b>Authorised Absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: Working Together To Improve Attendance (DfE May 2022)

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

