




# Attendance Policy

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Reviewed by	Health & Safety, Premises and Safeguarding Committee

Signed:   
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**Chair of Governors**

Dated: 10.07.2025

Signed:   
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## Rationale

It is the right of every young person to receive a full-time education and the responsibility of parents, pupils and school staff to work collaboratively to ensure that each child has the best opportunity of achieving their full potential. Research has highlighted the clear link between poor attendance and low academic achievement, stating that ‘failure to attend school regularly can have a major impact on young people’s education, their future and their life chances.’<sup>1</sup> Absence from school disrupts the learning of young people, severely limiting their ability to reach their full academic potential, as well as impacting upon their ability to form lasting and meaningful relationships with peers and staff.

Poor attendance results in young people missing out on a coherent education and exposure to the full curriculum in each subject area, this limits the extent to which teachers can ensure that each pupil makes the academic progress required on a daily basis and over periods of time. *‘Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school only three per cent manage to achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including Maths and English. 73 per cent of pupils who have over 95 per cent attendance achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C’<sup>2</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Improving attendance at school’, Charlie Taylor - DFE-00036-2012.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Improving attendance at school’, Charlie Taylor - DFE-00036-2012.

As well as limiting learning, poor attendance also means that young people may miss out on the numerous extracurricular opportunities that are available to them through the Academy. These experiences provide fantastic opportunities for young people to develop life skills, social skills and mature into well rounded individuals. Research also indicates that young people who are absent from school without permission are most vulnerable to being drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour<sup>3</sup> and are especially at risk of abuse and sexual exploitation.

Goldington Academy takes a pro-active approach to ensuring consistently high attendance for each of its pupils and seeks a committed involvement from all stakeholders in promoting the continued improvement of attendance for all pupils.

The Academy's attendance targets for the current Academic Year are:

- KS3 – 96%
- KS4 – 96%

### **Legal Frameworks and guidance:**

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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](#)

### **Policy aims**

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on

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<sup>3</sup> 2004 Youth Crime Survey.

[working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- 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 promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues

- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

### **The Principal**

The Principal is responsible for:

- The 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, and/or authorising key staff to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

### **The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance

- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

### **The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- 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 Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal/Designated Senior Leader (authorised by the Principal) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### **Form Tutors and Subject Tutors**

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance for morning sessions on a daily basis and subject tutors are responsible for recording attendance for the afternoon session using the correct codes (see Appendix 1). Subject Tutors are responsible for recording attendance for the lessons they teach.

### **School admin staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the [head of year/DSL] where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **Parents**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides 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 with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- Contact 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
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting their child's form tutor/head of year who can be contacted via email or via the school office.

## **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session, on time

## **Recording attendance**

### **Attendance register**

We will keep an electronic 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.50 am and ends at 3.40 pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50 am and will be kept open until 10.30 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.40pm and will be kept open until 2.40 pm.

## **Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as is practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via 01234 261516 or office @goldington.beds.sch.uk.

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 will be notified of this in advance.

## **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents should inform the school office. However, we encourage parents 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 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.

## **Lateness and punctuality**

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

## **Following up unexplained absence**

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

Contact the pupil's parent 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 inform other agencies e.g. Police, Education Welfare Officer, Children's Social Services.

- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Contact the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance



- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 5.2 below), as appropriate.

### **Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through termly reports and through regular communication.

Parents/carers are welcome to contact the school for up-to-date information relating to attendance at any time.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

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

The Principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Principal will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as any circumstance which is necessary for personal reasons and cannot be avoided.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

### Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### Penalty notices

The Principal (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.

### **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.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

The school uses a number strategies to promote good attendance. For example:

- Regular communication with parents and pupils about the importance of good attendance
- Regular assemblies to promote attendance
- Regular monitoring and reporting
- Tailored approaches for pupils who are struggling with maintaining good school attendance

## **Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school**

### **Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance**

A tailored approach is taken to support pupils who are absent because of complex barriers to education. This may include:

- Extra support in lessons
- Referrals to various agencies e.g. Early Help/mental health agencies
- Tailored approaches in school e.g. 'meet and greet'
- Adaptions to the individual's timetable

### **Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND**

A tailored approach is taken to support pupils who are absent because of mental or physical ill health or SEND. This may include:

- Extra support in lessons
- Intervention for the SENDCo
- Referrals to various agencies e.g. Early Help/mental health agencies/Hospital Outreach Education/CDC
- Adaptions to the individual's timetable

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

### **Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence**

A tailored approach is taken to support those returning to school after long periods of absence. This approach will be discussed and implemented by the pupil's head of year, in conjunction with other key staff e.g. the DSL/SENDCo etc.

## **Attendance monitoring**

### **Monitoring attendance**

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

## **Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- 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

## **Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

## **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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - 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 to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Provide bespoke approaches e.g. daily/weekly communication to those with the highest absence.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

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

### **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](#).

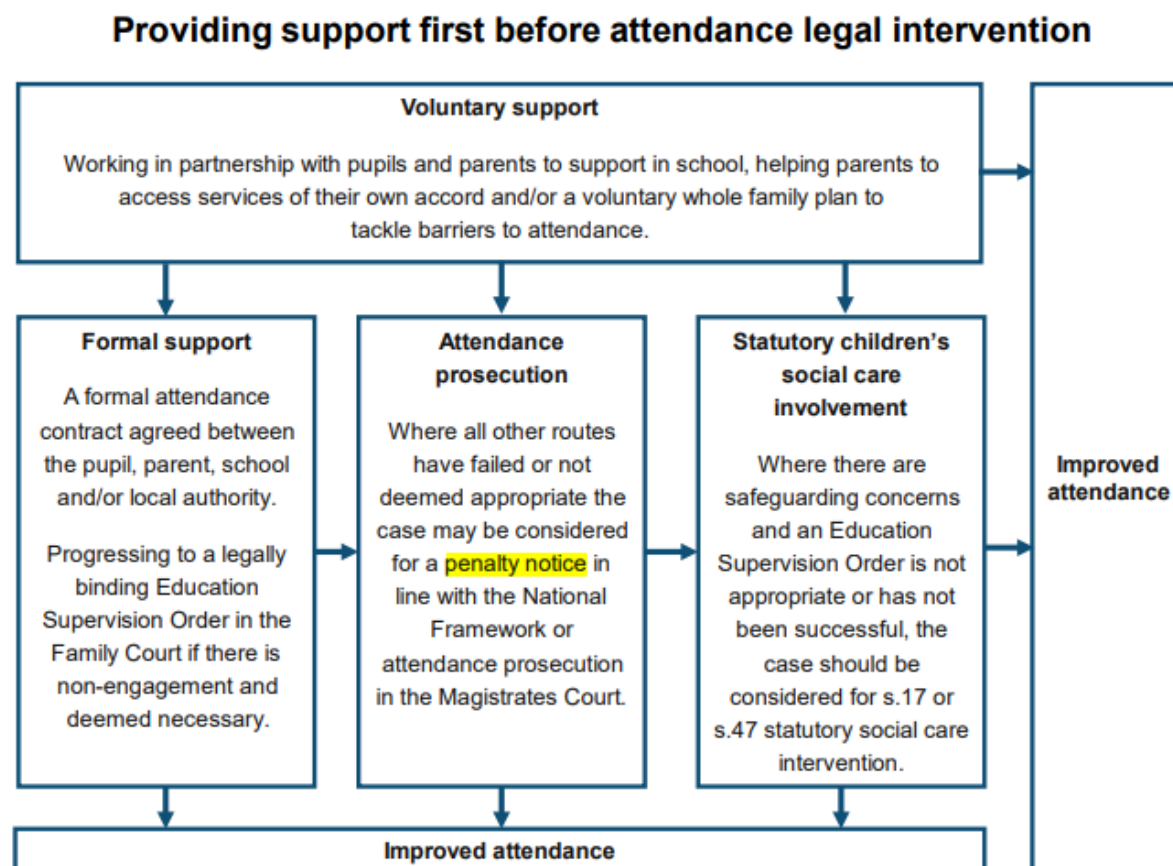
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local 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
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	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: Providing Support first before Attendance legal intervention



The school will work with the local partners and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. This includes:

- Attendance contracts
- Education Supervision orders
- Attendance Prosecution
- Parenting Orders
- Penalty Notices

Please visit [Working together to improve school attendance - August 2024.pdf](#) for detailed information on the interventions listed above.

## **Attendance procedures for absenteeism**

Heads of Year will carry out weekly attendance monitoring using the BromCom attendance reporting system and will use their findings to inform their decisions around challenging absenteeism and referring individual cases to the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **Stage 1**

Pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees identified through use of BromCom attendance report.

### **Stage 2**

HOY to phone parents and raise concerns, phone call logged on BromCom communication log. Tracking sheet set up and saved in the HOY folder on the main system. Tracking sheet to be regularly updated throughout the process (See Appendix 4). Support offered either in house or through Early Help assessment.

### **Stage 3**

First official letter from HOY (See Appendix 5) if no improvement in attendance from stage 2.

### **Stage 4**

HOY invites parents into meeting if no improvement from stage 3. An attendance contract action plan is put in place (See Appendix 7).

Legal Intervention may begin.

If the plan is not met then the case will be referred to EWO (See Appendix 6 + 8).

### **Stage 5**

EWO/SLT/HOY meeting with parent.

Legal intervention may begin.

Live case to Education Welfare Service.

### **Suspected Missing Child**

Having followed all of the procedures outlined in the policy and staff have been unable to establish a reason for absence and the pupil has not attended for 10 school days a Missing Child – School Referral Form (See Appendix 3) will be completed and forwarded to the EWO for action.

### **Links to other policies**

Behaviour policy

Pastoral care and guidance policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## **Child Employment/Children Missing Education**

- Child Employment - <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare/child-employment>

Please contact via email only – [ChildLicensing@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:ChildLicensing@bedford.gov.uk)

- Child Performance - <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare/child-performance><https://www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare/child-performance>

Please contact via email only – [ChildLicensing@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:ChildLicensing@bedford.gov.uk)

- Children Missing education - <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare/child-missing-education-referrals>

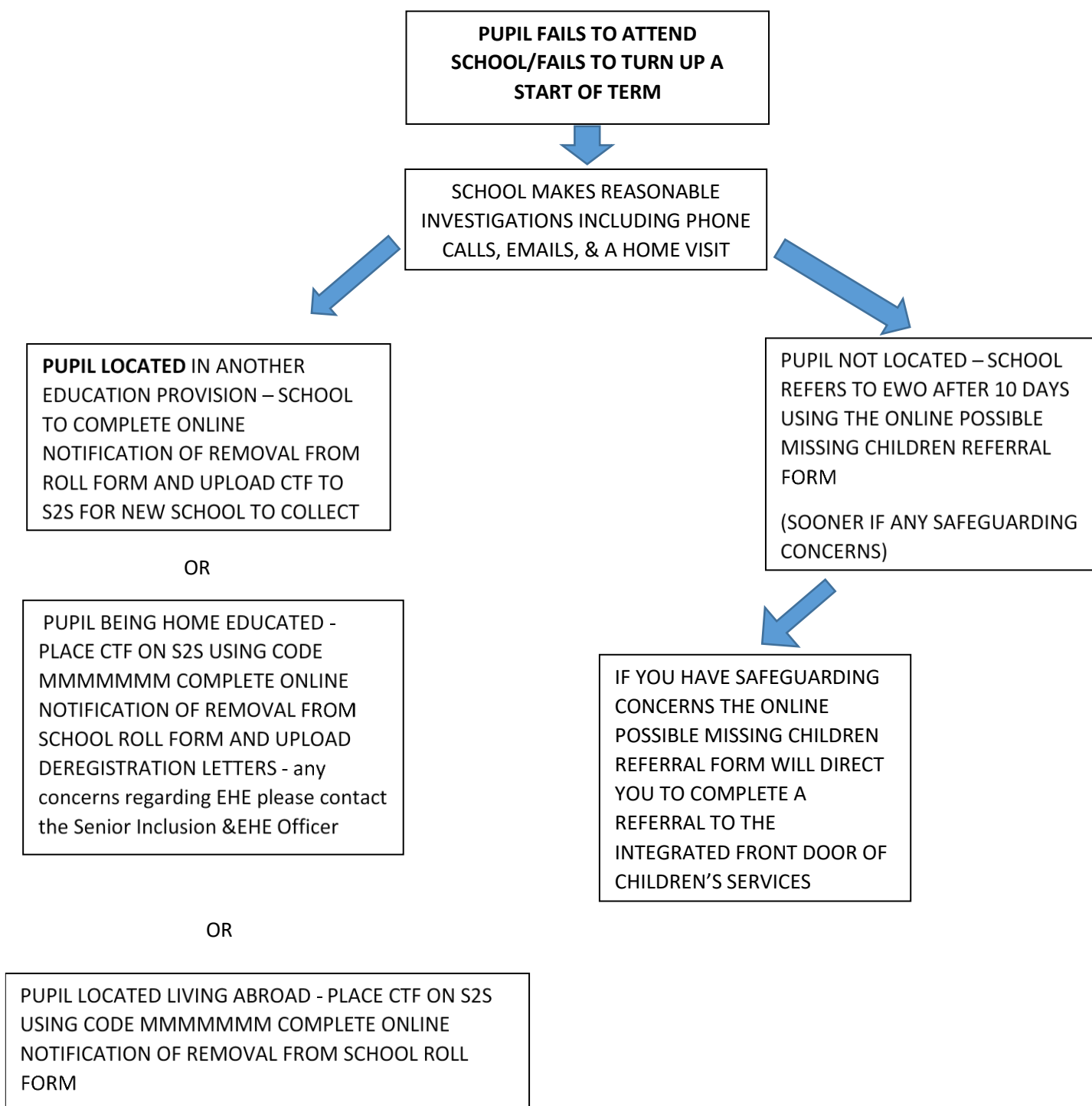
Please also refer to the working together to improve school attendance to the CME page which is attached above.

Please kindly contact your IWO before making any contact with the CME Officer

Please contact the Child Missing Education Officer via email only at [cme@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:cme@bedford.gov.uk)

## MISSING CHILDREN REFERRAL

### PROCESS REMINDER – FOR ALL BEDFORD SCHOOLS



Link for referral to Missing Children: [www.bedford.gov.uk/possiblemissingchild](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/possiblemissingchild)

**PRINT THIS PAGE FOR YOUR OFFICE WALL AS A PROMPT FOR THIS PROCESS**

## APPENDIX 4: Tracking Sheet

<b>Pupil Name:</b>		<b>Form:</b>	<b>Year:</b>	<b>Maths Level:</b>	<b>English Level</b>	<b>Science Level:</b>
<b>Autumn Term 1 percentage attendance</b>	<b>Autumn Term 2 percentage attendance</b>	<b>Spring Term 1 percentage attendance</b>	<b>Spring Term 2 percentage attendance</b>	<b>Summer Term 1 percentage attendance</b>	<b>Summer Term 2 percentage attendance</b>	
<b>Patterns</b>	<b>Patterns</b>	<b>Patterns</b>	<b>Patterns</b>	<b>Patterns</b>	<b>Patterns</b>	
<b>Concern/Information Term</b>		<b>Autumn</b>		<b>Spring Term</b>		<b>Summer Term</b>
<b>Strategies/Advice</b>						
<b>Outcome</b>						

## APPENDIX 5: First official letter from HOY



Engaging minds. Nurturing success. Inspiring futures.

Haylands Way, Bedford MK41 9BX

**Telephone:** 01234 261516

**e-mail:** [office@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:office@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

**Website:** [www.goldington.beds.sch.uk](http://www.goldington.beds.sch.uk)

**Principal:** Mr. Francis Galbraith BSc (Hons), NPQH, MBA

---

Dear \*

I am writing to you concerning \* school attendance. The school has a policy, agreed with the Education Welfare Service, of informing parents if their child's attendance rate falls below 90%. Whilst we recognise that Pupils should not be in school when they are ill, we must stress the importance of regular attendance and the effect absence has on academic and social progress.

\* attendance rate so far this academic year is \*%. The school will be monitoring this over the next few weeks. If there is no significant sign of improvement in that time, an attendance meeting will be arranged in school.

Please contact the school if you feel we can help and support your child in increasing their level of school attendance.

Yours sincerely

**HOY name**

**Head of Year**

## APPENDIX 6: Attendance Referral



### EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE: ATTENDANCE REFERRAL

From .....School

The Education Welfare Service accepts referral enquiries on the understanding that the referral to us has been discussed with parent/guardian/carer (and pupils where appropriate). If *no contact* has been made with the responsible adult, please enter reason below. The school should have taken some action to remedy the situation prior to any request. *Please note this action below:*

Student Name.....M / F  
 Address.....Post Code.....  
 DOB.....Year Group..... Class..... Ethnic Origin.....  
 Language used at home..... G.P. ....  
 Other Agencies Involved ..... (complete details overleaf)  
 LAC ? Yes / No

#### SEN Stage:

<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> School Action Details ..... .....
<input type="checkbox"/> School Action Plus Details ..... .....	<input type="checkbox"/> Statement Details ..... .....Last Review Date.....

#### Names of Parents/Carers/Guardians (living at home)

Surname	First/Given Name	Title	Relationship	Telephone Number

#### Details of other significant adult(s) recorded on school records (not living at home address)

Surname	First/Given Name	Title	Relationship	Telephone Number
Address				



**School Intervention**

Please tick action you have taken in an attempt to resolve the situation

✉ Letter home (attach copies) ☐

☎ Telephone call (detail below) ☐

😊 Meeting with parents (detail below) ☐

? Other intervention (detail below) ☐  
(Please Specify)

Brief Summary of Intervention (use separate sheet if necessary)

.....

.....

.....

**Please state any known concerns to staff safety -**

.....

.....

➤ **Learning (*remember to attach Attendance Certificate*)**

**Progress, achievement, aspirations – Are they progressing/developing age appropriately and having positive impact on others?**

➤ **Links to other Agencies**

**Are there any other agencies involved who are supporting the parent/carers and/or child?**

➤ **Health**

**Physical, emotional and social development – is this young person physically and mentally healthy?**

➤ **Parents & Carers**

**Family history, functioning and well being – do they keep this young person safe from harm, do they provide emotional warmth and stability?**

**School Referrer**..... **Date** .....

**(& Status)** .....**Contact Number** .....

**Communication following referral** Once a referral has been accepted, the Education Welfare Officer will keep you closely informed of action taken. We would also ask that you keep the Education Welfare Officer informed of any meetings/actions taken by the school with the referred pupil as this may impact on our Case Management.

<b>EWS Use Only</b>	
<b>Date referral first requested (if appropriate)</b>	
<b>Date referral received</b>	

## APPENDIX 7: Attendance Contract Action Plan

### Attendance Contract Action Plan

**SCHOOL:** ..... **Initial / Review**

Pupil: ..... DOB: ..... Ethnicity: ..... Looked After Child: Y/N

Form Group: ..... Form Tutor: ..... Head of Year: .....

SEN: ..... Pupil Premium: ..... Stage 1 letter sent on: .....

**Purpose of this plan is to improve the pupil's school attendance and address any issues that are affecting the pupil's attendance.**

Attendance Level (%): ..... Authorised (%): ..... Unauthorised (%): .....

Difficulty	YES	NO	Difficulty	YES	NO
1. Bullying			5. School Relationships		
2. Medical			6. Academic		
3. Home issues			7. Behaviour/Attitude		
4. Transport			8. Other		

#### **Identified Difficulty & Action Plan (to include Attendance Target for next 3 weeks)**

No.	Difficulty	Action	By Whom

#### **Other Actions (to be completed if parents do not attend or at 3 week review of Parenting Contract)**

ACTION	Y/N	DATE REQUESTED	BY WHOM
Penalty Notice Warning Request			
Referral to EWS			
Referral to Early Help			
Referral to Social Services			

#### **The School's promise (Examples)**

- Contact parent if pupil is absent from school without an explanation.
- Be available as a named person for parents to contact in school regarding attendance.
- Provide pupil with a school support worker if needed.
- Respond to any problems reported that could affect attendance.
- Make referrals to other agencies for example the attendance service or school health.
- Be point of contact in school for student.

**Parent's promise (Examples)**

- To supply details of their full names, address and telephone number and notify school immediately of any changes.
- To contact school on the first day of absence regarding the reason for absence and give an estimated day of return.
- To inform school of any problem affecting attendance.
- To work with other agencies to resolve any issues affecting attendance.
- To bring or arrange for someone to bring their child into school.
- To sign report cards and discuss them with their child.
- Set rules at home to make sure their child goes to bed and gets up at a reasonable time.
- Attend parenting classes or support groups if needed.
- Provide supporting medical evidence if their child is sick.

**Pupil's promise (Examples)**

- To be organised for school the night before
- To tell staff if I have an issue or am struggling with learning
- To attend school on time each day
- To set up a good home routine
- To follow the school's behaviour policy

We, the undersigned agree to the Action Plan above and will co-operate fully with these aims. We will review the plan in three weeks on .....

**Signed:**

Parent/Carer..... Parent/Carer.....

Pupil..... Head of Year.....

Form Tutor..... Other .....

Date.....

## APPENDIX 8: EWO Referral Letter



Engaging minds. Nurturing success. Inspiring futures.

Haylands Way, Bedford MK41 9BX

**Telephone:** 01234 261516

**e-mail:** [office@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:office@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

**Website:** [www.goldington.beds.sch.uk](http://www.goldington.beds.sch.uk)

**Principal:** Mr. Francis Galbraith BSc (Hons), NPQH, MBA

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Dear Parent/Guardian

**Re: Student's name**

Following further monitoring of **child's name** attendance, I am still concerned about that the amount of time **he/she** is missing from school. I would like to arrange a meeting with you to discuss the reasons for the absences and devise a plan to increase **Student's name** level of attendance. Would you please attend this meeting at school on **Date and time**. If this is not convenient please let me know and I will arrange an alternative date or time.

If you are unable to attend a meeting in School or if attendance does not improve as a result of this meeting, Goldington Academy will be obligated to consider making a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service.

Yours sincerely

## APPENDIX 9: Non School Attendance - Penalty Notice Process

### Non School Attendance - Penalty Notice Process – Leave of Absence

The information below reflects the new legislation that came into effect from 19 August 2024 in relation to the requesting of fines for unauthorised leave of absence during term time. Having 3 holidays within a 3 year period could result in legal action being taken against the parent / carer.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> unauthorized leave of absence since 19 August 2024.**

*(Current school will need to check whether the request for a penalty is the 1<sup>st</sup> one since 19 August 2024. If there has been a previous request from a different local authority or another school it will be necessary to move to the next stage in the process.)*

Where the criteria is met, a penalty fine will be issued for £160 but will be reduced to £80 pounds if paid within 21 days.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> unauthorized leave of absence since 19 August 2024.**

*(Current school will need to check whether the request for a penalty is the 2<sup>nd</sup> one since 19 August 2024. If there has been previous requests from a different local authority or another school it will be necessary to move to the next stage in the process.)*

Where the criteria is met, a penalty fine will be issued for £160. There is no consideration for a reduction for early payment.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> unauthorized leave of absence since 19 August 2024.**

*(Current school will need to check whether the request for a penalty is the 3<sup>rd</sup> one since 19 August 2024. If there has been previous requests from a different local authority or another school it will be necessary to move to the next stage in the process.)*

Where the criteria is met, a penalty fine will NOT be issued. Instead the parent/carers will be summonsed to attend court.

**Any further unauthorised leave of absence may result in returning to court under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act.**



**Bedford Borough Council**  
**Non-school Attendance – Fixed Penalty Notices**  
**Local Code of Conduct**  
**(revised and operational from 19 August 2024)**

**RATIONALE**

1. Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. In law an offence occurs if a parent 'fails to secure a child's attendance at school at which they are a registered pupil, and that absence is not authorised by the school. Parents are supported by school, Local Authority Services and Partner Agencies to overcome barriers to regular attendance.
2. Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated Local Authority (LA) Officers, Head Teachers, (& Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2024 came into force on 19 August 2024 and this Code of Conduct supersedes **Circular H/04/49 'Implementation of Penalty Notices and Parenting Contracts for absence from schools'**.
3. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions to enforce attendance at school currently available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.
4. The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 1989.
5. The LA has the prime responsibility for developing a protocol within which all partners named in the Act will operate and has responsibility for the overall administration of the Penalty Notice Scheme.
6. This local code sets out the procedures and terms under which Penalty Notices can be issued in Bedford Borough. Authorised persons should issue Penalty Notices in compliance with this code in order to ensure that the powers are consistently applied.

**PROCEDURES FOR ISSUING PENALTY NOTICES**

7. Bedford Borough Council Inclusion and Welfare Service (IWS) in consultation with schools (and other agencies where appropriate) will be responsible for the decision to issue Penalty Notices. This will ensure consistency in the delivery of the scheme; avoid school-home conflicts and ensure that the Penalty Notices are not being issued when the process towards court prosecution has already started. The IWS will receive requests to issue Penalty Notices from schools, the police and neighbouring LA's. These requests will be considered provided that:
  - all relevant and evidential information is supplied.
  - the circumstances of the pupil's absence meet the requirements of this protocol.
  - the issuing of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other intervention strategies or other enforcement sanctions already being processed.
  - the IWS is satisfied that the referred has supplied information which evidences that appropriate support has been offered to the child/ family prior to referral.

8. The IWS will aim to action all Penalty Notice referrals within 10 schools' days of receipt and where sufficient evidence of prior action(s) is/are included in the accompanying school information which is also submitted alongside the Penalty Notice Referral:
  - where information is available that indicates the child has moved into the Local Authority, contact the previous authority to check whether previous Penalty Notices have been issued within the 3-year period.
  - where appropriate, issues a Penalty Notice to Improve to the parent(s)\* of the possibility that a Penalty Notice will be issued.
  - In the same letter, where relevant, set a period of 15 school days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence.
  - Issue a Penalty Notice through the post at the end of the 15-day period if the required level of improvement has not been achieved.
9. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

#### **CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE A PENALTY NOTICE MAY BE ISSUED**

10. A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of **unauthorised** absence.
11. The issuing of a Penalty Notice will usually be restricted to one in an academic year (this does not apply to unauthorised Leave of Absence in Term Time). If a Penalty Notice has been issued and has been issued and has been either paid or has led to a prosecution for non-payment, except in exceptional circumstances, no further Penalty Notice will be issued for the remainder of that academic year (this does not apply to Unauthorised Leave of Absence in Term Time). If the child concerned continues to accrue unauthorised absences, the case should be considered for referral to the Inclusion and Welfare Service.
12. If in an individual case the local authority (or other authorised officer) believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.
13. The National Framework for Penalty Notices sets out that a maximum of 2 Penalty Notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, then the legal action under Section 444 Education Act 1996 will be initiated.
14. If more than one parent\* has parental responsibility, both parents will receive a Penalty Notice (i.e. 1 person per child). In situations where there is more than one pupil in a family with irregular school attendance, multiple Penalty Notices can be issued to the same parents during the year.
15. A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a Penalty Notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a notice to improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. An authorised officer can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate, but they do not expect a Notice to Improve would have any impact on a parent's behaviour (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence). There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent may receive a Notice to Improve of the possible issuing of a Penalty Notice. A Notice to Improve will not be issued for absences related to unauthorised leave of absence in term time.
16. The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate:



- When the pupil has taken Unauthorised Leave of Absence during term-time and the absence has not been authorised by the school, providing the school has taken into account Department for Education Statutory Guidance to inform its decision making.
- Following a Truancy Patrol when the school has recorded the absence of the pupil as unauthorised.
- In the early stages of intervention where the school or IWS believes that the sanction may lead to an improvement in attendance, e.g. persistent late arrival at school, parents' failure to attend/co-operate at an Attendance Contract meeting.

17. To ensure consistent delivery of Penalty Notices, the following criteria will apply:

- At least 10 sessions (equal to 5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the previous 10 school weeks. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or academic years.
- Except in exceptional circumstances, the parent\* will receive a Notice to Improve (advising of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued) and a maximum of 30 school days to affect an improvement. Improvement is defined as no further unauthorised absence within the Notice to Improve period unless there are exceptional circumstances.

#### **OTHER TYPE OF PENALTY NOTICE NOT INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

18. 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 fixed period or permanent exclusion. The school must have notified the parents of the days the pupil must not be present in the school place. **This type of penalty notice is not included in the National Framework** and therefore not subject to the same considerations about support being provided or count towards the limit as part of the escalation process in the case of repeat offences for non-attendance. These penalty notices are charged at £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

#### **PROCEDURE FOR WITHDRAWING PENALTY NOTICES**

19. A Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn in the following circumstances:

- When it has been issued to a wrong person
- When the use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this protocol
- It contains a material error.
- Not paid, and the LA has not and does not intend to instigate proceedings.

#### **INFORMING SCHOOLS OF THE OUTCOME OF A PENALTY NOTICE**

20. The IWS will inform a Principal on a termly basis of the outcome of referrals made for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

#### **PAYMENT OF PENALTY NOTICES**

21. The arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

- The first Penalty Notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days beginning with the date on which the notice is received.

- If a second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, this penalty notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160. **There will not be a reduction of the penalty notice if paid any earlier, this notice should be paid within 28 days.**
- A third penalty notice will not be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child where two previous penalty notices have been issued within a 3 year period of the date of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within these 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as other attendance legal interventions i.e. School Attendance Order or Education Supervision Order.

22. Monies collected will be used for the administration of the penalty notice and prosecution.

22. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the immediate prosecution of parent(s)\* under the provisions of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 unless:

- It has been issued to the wrong person.
- The use of the Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of this protocol.
- The notice was materially defective.
- The LA has not started legal proceedings and has no intention of doing so.

## POLICY AND PUBLICITY

23. The deployment of Penalty Notices as a sanction is included in the Authority's Attendance Strategy. All school attendance policies should include information on the deployment of Penalty Notices which should be brought to the attention of parents. The LA will include information on the use of Penalty Notices and other attendance enforcement sanctions in promotional material.

## REPORTING AND REVIEW

24. A review of the deployment of the Penalty Notices will be undertaken at regular intervals and the strategy amended as appropriate.

### \*Definition of a parent

Section 576, Education Act 1996 defines a parent as:

- all natural parents, whether named or not;
- any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person.
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of the child or young person. A person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered a parent in education law.
- In this document 'parent' means each and every person referred to within this definition

August 2024

## APPENDIX10: Elective Home Educated Process Flowchart

