

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Non Sibi Sed Aliis

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119, vs 105

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil." **Ephesians 5: 15-16**

This policy document and the content contained therein remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. No amendments can be made without their express instructions and they remain the final arbiters in any matters relating to it.

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1. Introduction

Balshaw's is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled High School and as a Christian school we believe that each of us is an individual made in God's image. Behaviour is therefore important to us, in that we should be the best that we can be in our relationships towards each other and before God. This is a successful school, and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all Students to achieve their potential and aspire to excellence.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable

reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Absence or late arrival also disrupts daily routines and teaching and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for the transition to secondary school and, eventually, higher education, training and employment.

At Balshaw's we know that the foundation of good attendance is a school that feels calm, safe and supportive, somewhere students want to be every day and are ready to learn.

New DfE analysis **School attendance: annual and one-off events driving short-term absences** shows that short-term, occasional absences—such as birthdays, local events, medical appointments or extended weekends—can significantly affect overall attendance.

See table below for the impact of absence on attainment

Attendance	Number of GCSEs achieved at A*-C or 9-4
100%	9 GCSE's
96% and above	8 GCSE's
90 – 95%	7 GCSE's
Under 90%	5 GCSE's

It is very important therefore that you make sure your child attends regularly and our attendance policy sets out how together we will achieve this. The policy will be applied fairly and consistently and we will always consider the individual needs of Students, and their families, who have specific barriers to attendance. We will also be mindful of our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and give consideration to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our attendance target this year is 97%, but all pupils should strive to achieve 100% attendance if they can.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY - RATIONALE

Balshaw's Church of England High School recognises that Students cannot achieve the highest standards of which they are capable without a corresponding high standard of attendance and punctuality. The aims of this policy are to encourage Students to attend school every day (190 days per year) and to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential for Students to maximise their potential and achieve success. Any absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances.

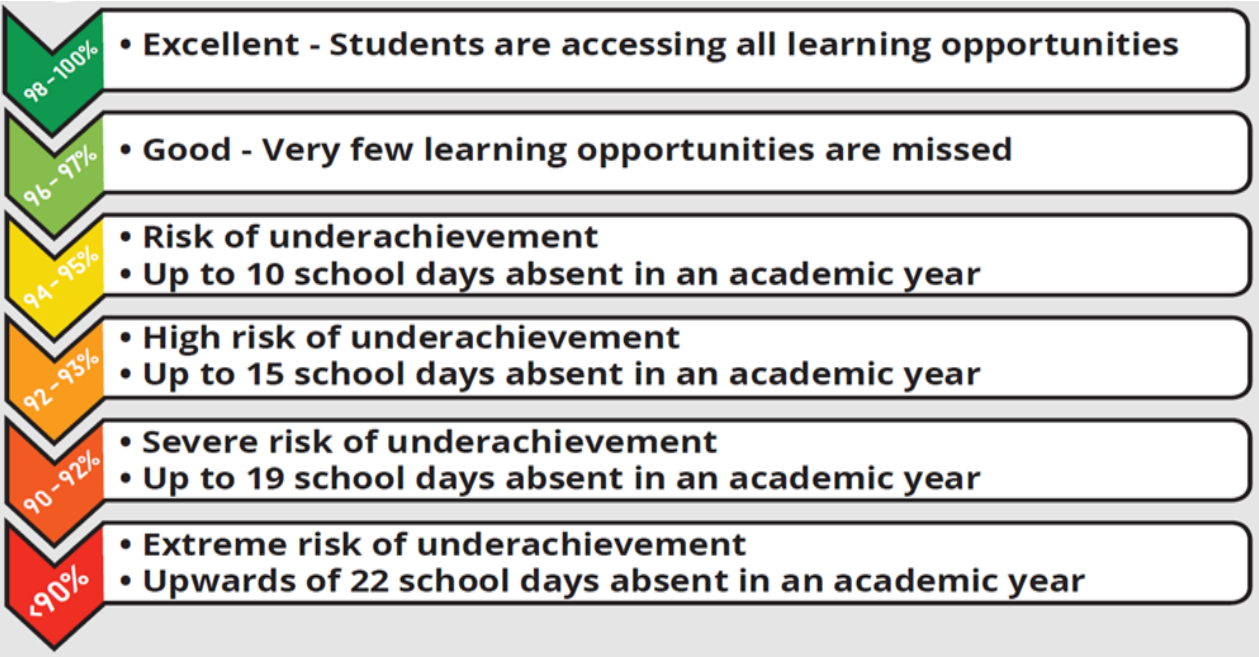
Legal requirement

Attendance registers are kept by the school and updated daily by appropriate staff. The register is kept in accordance with the legal and statutory guidance and requirements as follows: Legislation: The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006: (SI 2006/1751) as subsequently amended: The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Extensive research on the impact of excellent school attendance shows that Students who attend well, are more likely to achieve, there is a direct link between under-achievement and absences below 95%. Every hour in school is a valuable learning experience that cannot be recovered or repeated. At Balshaw's we are committed to providing high quality education for all of our Students by building a healthy learning environment in which Students can develop and fulfil their potential. This policy sets out how we can support and encourage high levels of attendance for our school community and the actions that will be taken by school should attendance levels fall below that which is expected.

Our attendance target is 97% but all Students should aim to achieve 100% attendance if possible.

Attendance and Attainment - The table below also shows the impact of excellent attendance and the number of days missed in school on educational attainment



Ensuring your child has regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility

2.Responsibilities and expectations

2.1 Families

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly, if they are of compulsory school age and registered at a school (see the appendix for details of how the law applies to school attendance and how "parent" is defined in law).

Parents and Students should know the times the school day starts and finishes and when the register closes (see section 4, below), the processes for requesting leave (see section 3.4), and the process for informing school of the reason for unexpected absence (as follows).

If your child is going to be absent, parents must inform school as soon as possible and at the latest by 9.10 am on the first day of absence via Synergy, by contacting school on 01772 421009 or emailing attendance@balshaws.org.uk

Parents must also ensure that school has up-to-date contact information for themselves and emergency contacts.

Students' responsibilities depend upon their age, maturity and capability but they too must do their best to attend school regularly and punctually.

2.2 School

Head Teacher

- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and protected time allocated to discharge those responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school confirms to statutory requirements regarding attendance.
- Consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some, all, or none of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision.
- Where there is uncertainty regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence, or to request further evidence to support the decision-making process.
- Provide regular reports to the governing body on school attendance, including persistent absence and vulnerable groups.

Senior Attendance Champion

- The Senior Attendance Champion has strategic responsibility for attendance across the school and works closely with the Headteacher, Attendance Team, pastoral staff, governors and other relevant professionals to promote high levels of attendance and reduce persistent and severe absence.

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- Provide strategic leadership and oversight of the school's attendance approach and ensure that attendance remains a whole-school priority.
- Ensure that the school's Attendance Policy reflects current statutory guidance and is implemented consistently and fairly.
- Monitor attendance data regularly, identifying patterns, trends and pupils or groups who may be at increased risk of persistent or severe absence.
- Ensure that attendance concerns are identified at an early stage and that appropriate support is offered to pupils and families to understand and address barriers to attendance.
- Ensure that individual circumstances, including SEND, disability, health needs, safeguarding concerns and other vulnerabilities, are appropriately considered when developing attendance support and interventions.
- Work with staff, pupils, parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate to develop effective attendance support plans.
- Monitor the effectiveness of attendance interventions and use attendance data and wider information to evaluate their impact.
- Ensure that attendance practice supports the school's safeguarding responsibilities and that unexplained or concerning absence is followed up promptly.
- Promote a consistent understanding among all staff that attendance is the responsibility of everyone within the school community.
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate information and training so that they understand their responsibilities in promoting good attendance and responding to concerns.
- Report regularly to senior leaders and governors on attendance performance, key trends, vulnerable groups and the impact of actions taken.
- Work collaboratively with the Local Authority and other relevant services when additional support or statutory intervention is required.

- Establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Regularly communicate student attendance and punctuality levels to parents.

Other staff with designated responsibilities for Attendance – School Attendance Officer and Family Support Officer

- First day response: contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and record this information accordingly. Contact emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached.
- Update attendance registers.
- Regularly monitor and analyse data to identify student, class and whole school attendance concerns and to target attendance improvement support for those who need it most, particularly vulnerable groups.
- Discuss attendance concerns at an early stage with Students and parents.
- Work with Students and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, using attendance contracts where appropriate.
- Involve external agencies to support Students and parents as appropriate to better understand and address the issues causing attendance concerns.
- Promote regular attendance through the school newsletter, website and displays and ensure the school's attendance policy is readily accessible.
- Use projects and strategies to improve attendance and punctuality for groups, classes or the whole school (eg incentive and reward schemes, certificates, traffic light letters).

All school staff

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for Students and a safe learning environment, particularly for those returning to school following a period of absence.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise that absence is a symptom of other issues impacting a student's welfare and can be a warning sign of safeguarding concerns.
- Adhere to the procedures in place within school to promote good attendance.
- Promote the link between attendance and educational attainment to Students and parents.
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the head teacher.
- Raise any concerns about attendance with the Senior Attendance Champion and/or head teacher.

Governors

- Ensure compliance with The School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually or more frequently if required.
- Agree targets for attendance at Balshaw's C.E High School
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, instigate a review of school's attendance procedures.
- Authorise the head teacher (or other designated person) to make decisions regarding leave of absence requests.
- Work with the Headteacher in establishing equitable and consistent criteria against which leave requests will be considered.

School attendance contacts
Contact for parents to notify school of an absence- Mrs Leyland School Attendance Officer on 01772 421009 or attendance@balshaws.org.uk
Contacts for day to day enquiries about attendance: attendance@balshaws.org.uk , or your child's Tutor or Head of House
Support for specific and more serious attendance concerns: Attendance Officer Mrs Leyland, Family Support Officer Mrs Chaplin, Attendance Champion Mrs Wilson or your child's Form Tutor or Head of House
Senior Attendance Champion, the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school: Mrs Wilson, Deputy Headteacher
All of the staff named above can be contacted on 01772 421009

2.3 Lancashire County Council (the local authority)

School Attendance Support Team

Each school has a named contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can advise schools on attendance related matters, and with whom Targeting Support Meetings will be held. For mainstream nursery, primary and secondary schools this will be a School Attendance Support Worker (SASW); for special schools, short stay schools and student referral units (PRUs) this will be a School Attendance Consultant (SAC).

School Attendance Legal Team (SALT)

Following requests from schools for legal interventions when parents fail to ensure their children attend regularly, the School Attendance Legal Team undertakes enforcement processes, including penalty notices, prosecutions, parenting orders, education supervision orders and school attendance orders.

Children Missing Education (CME) Team

The Children Missing Education Team ensures the local authority fulfils its statutory duty to identify children in their area who are not registered Students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. For further information see section 7, below, regarding notifications schools must submit.

3. Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. As a school, we will always work with parents (and other agencies, as appropriate) to understand the reasons underlying absence. See link to Lancashire County Council's Attendance and Absence flyer attached – <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/absence-from-school/>

3.1 Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes or exceptional circumstances.

Exeats

- If a child needs to leave school for an appointment they must obtain an exeat slip from their Tutor. These will only be given if a parent has written or phoned school to advise us about the absence. Students are to report to the Pastoral Hub to be signed out by a member of the office staff on

production of an exeat slip signed by a member of the teaching staff.

- If a student subsequently returns to school the same day then she/he must report to the Pastoral Hub to be signed back in the book and on the exeat slip which can be later given to the tutor as confirmation.
- Students should be given permission to leave the premises **ONLY IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY**. They should not be given permission to go out for missing books / kit / packed lunches etc.
- Students not following these procedures should be followed up in the first instance by their tutors, who should impose a suitable sanction.

For any emergency appointments arranged on the same day, a stamped appointment card from the doctors/dentist on either, the student's return to school or the following day will be required. All emergency appointments will be marked as unauthorised until the Attendance Officer or Form Tutor receives the required information, only then will the mark be changed.

3.2 Unauthorised absences - Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or justifiable. If school has followed its attendance procedures and a student continues to have unauthorised absences, the school may see seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team or request legal interventions from the School Attendance Legal Team. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Shopping
- Holidays in term time which are not authorised by your child's school
- To get a hair cut/nail appointment or any other non emergency appointment
- Truancy
- Airport visits
- Birthday treats
- Days out / trips
- Looking after brothers and sisters at home
- Taking younger siblings to school resulting in lateness
- Non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Oversleeping
- Working
- Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily.
- Absences which do not justify a child not being at school
- Students who arrive at school after the register has closed and without a legitimate reason (see section 4.2).
- Days that exceed an amount of leave agreed by the head teacher.
- Collecting your child from school when they have contacted you that they feel ill rather than school contacting you

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised and, if there is any uncertainty relating to an absence, school may request further confirmation from parents before an absence is authorised. For absence due to illness, this may be in the form of:

- an appointment for your GP or for the hospital, clinic, etc.
- a prescribed medication or prescription for medication.
- medical notes/records.
- A letter from a medical professional such as a specialist or consultant.

- A medical evidence slip, authorised by a pharmacist, doctor, receptionist, etc which indicates that you have sought medical advice and outlines your child's medical condition.

Parents should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence and school will not ask you to do this.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a school, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

3.3 Persistent Absence (PA)

Persistent absence is when a student misses **10%** or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised and unauthorised (including illness, holiday, etc). Absence at this level will damage any student's educational prospects and we expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

At Balshaw's CE High School, we monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any student whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents will be informed of this promptly. Students who are persistent absentees are tracked and monitored carefully and the attendance procedures below (section 5) will be followed.

3.4 Severe Absence (SA)

Severely absent students are classed as those whose attendance is **50%** or below. This equates to a child missing 50% of their learning. Absence at this level will have a detrimental impact on learning and will undoubtedly damage any student's educational prospects and future plans. Students whose absence is at this level will have support in school and may need referrals outside agencies to help the family. We expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to address this level of absence.

3.5 Leave of Absence during term time

By law, maintained schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in **exceptional circumstances**. All leave of absence requests will be considered on their individual merits. Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence. If leave is being requested that involves arranging travel or accommodation, approval must be obtained from the Headteacher before making any bookings. The H code for holidays has now been removed from August 2024 by the DfE

Leave of absence in term time **will not** be granted unless:

- a request for leave of absence has been made in advance by a parent with whom the student normally resides (using the form available on the school website or from the school office), **and**
- the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the request.

Due to the need to evidence exceptional circumstances, parents are advised to provide school with any relevant information regarding their request at the point of application if they believe the circumstances are exceptional.

In considering the request school will also consider other factors such as:

- The timing of the requested leave, eg when a student is just starting at school or during assessment periods, such as SATs.
- A student's attendance record already includes unauthorised absence.
- Attendance is already a concern, or could become a concern, as a result of taking leave.

- Other periods of leave which the student may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract legal sanctions such as a penalty notice.

The Headteacher will be the final arbiter of decisions related to requests for leave of absence and there is no right to appeal any decision.

In certain circumstances, as outlined in regulation, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if leave is taken and the criteria governing removal from roll are met (see appendix).

3.6 Religious absence

School will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, eg Eid, and this will be marked as code R in the register. The day authorised will be that set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if the head teacher agrees that exceptional circumstances apply; this would be marked in the register as code C.

3.7 Participation in sporting events

Parents can request leave of absence for their child to take part in regional, national and international sporting events. However, as always, granting leave is at the head teacher's discretion and she/he will need to discuss with you the length and frequency of the absence(s) requested and how learning will continue if absence occurs, eg the sports club or association providing an approved education tutor.

Leave for a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school can be marked in the register as code P.

Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late in order to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the head teacher and is unlikely to be approved if it would occur regularly.

3.8 Participation in performances (eg theatre, television, modelling)

Parents of a child performer can request leave from school for their child to take part in a performance. A local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Before a licence is granted, school will be consulted and head teachers must be satisfied that the leave will not have a negative effect on the child's education.

Where the licence specifies the dates that the child is to be away from school, the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the licence does not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise the leave request. Any absence authorised for the child to take part in a performance will be recorded as code C1.

Parents wishing to apply for a performance licence should go to the Lancashire County Council [Child performance licences webpage](#).

From August 2024, the DfE have introduced new Attendance Codes. These new codes can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this document

4 Registration

4.1 Attendance registration

Morning registration is between 8.40am and 9.10am.

Afternoon registration is between 12.30pm and 12:40pm.

Registers will be done at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session and this will be done at the same time for all registered pupils.

The school day starts at 8:40am prompt. Students are expected to be at the school gates ready to be let into school at 8:30am and then 8:40am is when the registration period starts (ie when the register is taken and remains open).

When the attendance register has been taken it remains open until 9.10am in the morning and 12:30pm in the afternoon.

School finishes at 3.10pm.

4.2 Late arrival

Students who arrive after 8.50am or 12.30pm must go straight to the school office at the main entrance to sign in and give a reason for their lateness.

Students who arrive after the register has been taken (8.40am or 12:30pm) but before it is closed (9.10am or 1:00pm), will be marked as code L. This is classed as late but present for the session (ie the morning or afternoon).

Students who arrive after the register has closed and without a valid reason for being late (such as attending a dental or medical appointment) will be marked as code U, which is classed as an unauthorised absence but indicates that the student was physically present in school for part of the session.

Student lateness to school and registration - One of the aims of Balshaw's High School is to prepare children for adult life. To this end we expect everyone to be punctual at all times. We ask for parents full co-operation in ensuring that children leave home early enough to arrive at school before the start of the school day at 8.40am. Senior staff will make spot checks regarding student lateness and its follow up throughout the term. Letters, emails and phone calls will be made home to address student lateness to school.

4.3 Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting important news and information for the day. Students arriving late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

If your child is often late you will be asked to meet with your child's Head of House and/or a member of the pastoral support team/Deputy Headteacher to discuss ways to improve punctuality, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed may result in further action, as outlined below, under section 5.

How we manage lateness - Lesson attendance and punctuality

- Where at all possible, meetings should be held at breaks, lunchtimes and after school, and NOT

after assembly, thus causing student delay to lessons.

- Students should be dismissed promptly at the end of registration periods and lessons so that they can reach their next lesson on time.
- Student lateness to lessons without very good reason should not be tolerated. It is the subject teacher's responsibility to deal satisfactorily with student lateness which has no good reason (i.e. it should cease). If the subject teacher feels that his/her sanctions are having no/little effect then the help of the Curriculum Leader should be sought until the problem is effectively sorted out.
- Each member of staff must keep a register of all their own lessons
- Any 'suspicious' absence should be followed up on the same day.
- A student should only be let out of the classroom if absolutely necessary. It is important that all staff are rigorous in this matter so that Students will realise that going to the toilet in lesson time (except where there are specific medical problems), leaving books in lockers etc. are not acceptable and that we all expect and will enforce better organisation on their part.
- Heads of House or the Deputy Headteacher may request that the School Attendance Officer carry out unannounced visits to a student's house if attendance is poor.
- Students who have poor attendance may be invited to attend school to Attendance Panel Meetings with the School Attendance Officer, the Deputy Headteacher, The Headteacher and a Governor.

Sanctions for lateness

- Any student who is late 3 times after 8:50am in a week to school will be sanctioned with a day in the school Inclusion Unit.
- Any student who is late 3 times in a week to Tutor or lessons will be sanctioned in a whole school detention.
- The minutes will be added up and any student who is 30 minutes late or less will complete a 30 minute detention. If a student is late more than 30 minutes then they will complete a 60 minute detention. Eg a student cumulatively late to lessons/Tutor in a week totalling 23 minutes would be sanctioned with a 30-minute detention and a child who has more than this will complete a one hour detention. Tutors would also make contact home to discuss.
- A 3 minute rule for changeover of lessons is in place to allow Students to get to lessons by going across school to get to class on time.
- Anyone late after 3 minutes is then marked late with the number of minutes. Teachers will keep track of lateness and accurately enter the number of minutes late on Synergy.
- Any student kept at the Hub or who has been to the Hub would be given a pass to acknowledge this lateness.
- The overall impact of student lateness can be seen on the table below.

5 minutes late every day = 3 school days lost in a year	10 minutes late every day = 6.5 school days lost in a year	15 minutes late every day = 10 school days lost in a year	20 minutes late every day = 13 school days lost in a year	30 minutes late every day = 19 school days lost in a year
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5 School attendance procedures

5.1 First day of absence

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will telephone you on the first day of absence to find out what the reason is and when your child is expected to return. If we are unable to contact you, we will approach your emergency contacts and, if necessary, make a home visit. Please note that such home visits may be unannounced.

5.2 Attendance concerns

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any attendance problems together; this is nearly always successful. However, if concerns persist or absences are

unexplained, school will use the following procedures and interventions, as required, to support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality:

- Telephone calls and/or letters to make parents aware of school's concern about their child's attendance.
- When there is uncertainty about the reason for absence, school may ask parents to provide appropriate evidence and/or undertake home visits to ascertain where a child is and to ensure they are safe.
- Invitation to meetings to discuss concerns with the Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion/Head of House/Attendance Officer/Attendance Governor
- Attendance contracts to identify barriers to regular attendance, ways to overcome these and agree targets for improvement.
- Incentive and reward schemes for individual Students, if appropriate.
- The Early Help Assessment (EHA) process and/or referral to other agencies and services, including School Nurses and Primary Mental Health Workers, if appropriate.
- For unauthorised absences, request legal interventions by the local authority, such as penalty notices, prosecution or other attendance-related court orders.

Attendance data is used to identify pupils requiring support, and will consider the individual circumstances of each child's reasons for absence, barriers, SEND/disability, health needs and safeguarding context before deciding on the appropriate response. At any stage, we may seek advice from the local authority School Attendance Support Team.

5.3 Students with medical needs who have difficulty attending school

Government guidance on supporting Students at school with medical conditions (see appendix) emphasises the role of governing bodies in ensuring that Students with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other Students. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these Students, whether their condition is short or long term. School will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be in the form of reasonable adjustments, specific support or resources used within school, or by sourcing appropriate provision at another establishment. When education is to be provided at an alternative location, this should always be done via the use of a direction (please see section 6, below).

When a student has been absent from school for an extended period, the Attendance and Pastoral Teams and other support services will work with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

5.4 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We understand that absence is often a symptom of wider circumstances. School will seek to work with families and provide support first to help understand the underlying barriers before moving towards punitive action. We will work with pupils and parents to identify barriers to school attendance and put appropriate support or reasonable adjustments in place.

This is particularly important for pupils with SEND, disabilities, physical/mental health needs and other vulnerabilities. We will consider the individual circumstances and barriers faced by pupils with SEND, disabilities or health needs and will consider reasonable adjustments and additional support where appropriate. At all times we will ensure our policy is applied fairly and consistently while considering individual needs and barriers and the school's responsibility under the Equality Act obligations.

5.5 Young Carers- We recognise that young carers may experience additional challenges which can affect their attendance, punctuality, wellbeing and ability to engage fully in education. Staff will remain alert to

the potential impact of caring responsibilities and will work sensitively with pupils and their families to understand any barriers to attendance. Where a pupil is identified as a young carer, the school will consider their individual circumstances and, where appropriate, provide reasonable and proportionate support to promote regular attendance and reduce barriers to learning. The school will work with relevant internal staff and external agencies, where appropriate, to ensure that young carers are supported to access education and do not experience disadvantage as a result of their caring responsibilities.

5.6 Students refusing to attend school

At Balshaw's C.E High School we believe that every child has a right to a full-time education, and we would not accept "school refusal" as a reason for non-attendance. In such cases, we will work with parents to identify the reasons why a child may be reluctant to attend school. We may request advice from the School Attendance Support Team and, with consent, make referrals to other external partners such as the Children and Family Wellbeing Service or Primary Mental Health Workers, as appropriate, to try to ensure the correct support is secured for the child and their family.

Safeguarding and Home visits

Balshaw's will invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns. In addition, if the school suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the school safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, i.e. – social care, police. The school will inform parents / carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent / carer.

School will complete a safeguarding visit to any child that is absent from school after 3 days, has an unexplained absence, or parents have not made any contact to explain why their child is off school.

5.7 Promotion of good attendance

School will promote and incentivise attendance by acknowledging and rewarding good attendance by all Students and efforts to improve attendance by individual Students who have additional needs or challenging circumstances.

5.8 Use of penalty notices and other attendance legal interventions

Legal interventions may be sought if providing support to improve attendance is not appropriate (eg for an unauthorised holiday in term time), or has not been successful or engaged with. In accordance with the Lancashire code of conduct, we may request that the local authority issue penalty notices for unauthorised absences that include:

- Leave of absence which is taken without a prior request being made.
- Leave taken after a request has been declined.
- Days taken in excess of an agreed period of leave, without good reason.
- Other unauthorised absence that meets the required threshold, including sessions marked as late after the register has closed (code U).

On 19 August 2024 new penalty notice arrangements came into force, with changes to the cost of a penalty notice and to the thresholds at which penalty notices may be requested by school. The DfE now requires that schools **must** consider if a penalty notice is appropriate when the thresholds are met. The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at £160 per parent per child. This will reduce to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences as a result of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or consecutive school years.
- A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).
- If a school requests a penalty notice for absences other than unauthorised holidays, including being late after the register has closed, the local authority School Attendance Legal Team may issue a Notice to Improve to parents. A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and offers of support have not been engaged with by parents or have not worked, a Notice to Improve may be issued to give parents a final chance to engage with support and improve their child's attendance.

The code of conduct for penalty notices and information and FAQs for parents can be found on the Lancashire County Council [education penalty notice webpage](#).

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance

The new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child Penalty Notice Fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example, 2 siblings with unauthorised absence during term time may result in each parent being issued with one penalty notice per child.	10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. Penalty Notice Fines will now be considered when there <u>has</u> been 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period.
First Offence The first time Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance, the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days.	Second Offence (<u>within</u> 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice) The second time a Penalty Notice for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, the amount will <u>be</u> : £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
Third Offence (<u>within</u> 3 years from the date of issue of first penalty notice) The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance, a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. This is a criminal <u>offence</u> and a parent may end up with a criminal record.	

6 Alternative provision and use of directions

There is a range of circumstances when Students might be required to access educational provision at a venue other than their main school. The main reasons are:

- Students who have been permanently excluded or suspended for a period of more than 5 days.
- Students unable to access provision at their main school for medical reasons.
- Students required to attend another venue for the purpose of improving behaviour, either on a temporary basis or with a view to making a permanent move to the alternative provision (via a managed move).

When a student is required to attend alternative provision for the purposes of improving behaviour, the governors of the main school must issue a written direction or notice informing all parents of the alternative provision which their child is required to attend. Where a student is required to attend alternative provision for other reasons, the issuing of a written direction is considered best practice.

7 Notifications school must submit to the local authority

7.1 Admissions

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a student's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the student. This duty does not apply to Students who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided (currently Lancashire does not).

For all admissions to school for new Year 7 groups, parents are expected to accept and confirm the offer of a school place.

7.2 Leavers –

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in Regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests such information to be provided (Lancashire currently does not).

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the required information as laid out in the regulation.

In addition to submitting a notification about removal from roll, some circumstances also require school to make referral to other local authority teams such as the Elective Home Education team or the Children Missing Education team. Schools may also contact the School Attendance Support Team for advice on removing children from roll. For pupils with an EHCP on roll at a special school, the school must have the agreement of the Lancashire Inclusion Service (SEND) before removing from roll.

7.3 Students who fail to attend

All schools (including academies) must inform the local authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. In Lancashire schools, this can be done via a variety of means and school can contact the School Attendance Support Team for further advice.

7.4 Students on a part-time timetable

Schools must also inform the local authority when a student is placed on a part-time timetable. In Lancashire, this should be done via the appropriate form available to schools.

7.5 Children missing education (CME)

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not on roll at a school or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure they receive a full-time education.

If a student has stopped attending and her or his location is unknown, schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the student's name from the register. In such cases, school should undertake a home visit, prior to a referral being made to the local authority Children Missing Education team.

8. School Strategies for dealing with absence

- Tutor monitoring and discussions re attendance %
- 1st day Absence Contact phone call home
- Letters of concern to parents/guardians
- Inviting parents into school for discussion.
- Home visits where appropriate where absence is being questioned
- Safeguarding visits where appropriate if there are safeguarding concerns for the student
- Strategies for family support, including the use of Parenting Contracts where appropriate.
- Attendance Contracts
- Attendance Panels with a member of the Governing body and Parents
- Further school based action with more senior staff involved.
- Fixed Penalty Notices.

9. Attendance Monitoring and Attendance Indicators

We will send parents a half termly correspondence with details of their child's percentage attendance. Students will be divided into 3 identified 'groups' each half term based on their percentage attendance to date.

GROUP 1: RED	Attendance of 90% or below
GROUP 2: AMBER	Attendance of between 91% - 96%
GROUP 3: GREEN	Attendance of 97% or above

9.1 Strategies we will use for Group 1/Red students

Definitions –

- Students whose attendance is below 90% are classed by the DfE as **Persistently Absent** students
- Students whose attendance is 50% or below meaning they are classed as **Severely Absent** and will have missed over 50% or more of their education time.

A variety of the following strategies could be employed:

- Attendance warning letter to the parents/carers, with a monitoring improvement period outlined.
- First day personal phone calls in addition to the Synergy/e-mail system by the Attendance Officer or Family Support Officer
- The student to be met by the Attendance Officer or the Senior Attendance Champion and short-term targets set/attendance report implemented, with a 2 week monitoring period.
- A formal requirement for parents/carers (and the student) to attend an Attendance meeting in school with some or all of the following staff depending on the severity of the absence - the Senior Attendance Champion, Headteacher, Attendance Officer and a member of the Governing Body.
- If there is no improvement, a further requirement to attend an Attendance Panel meeting and/or a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

In addition, a TAF/CAF/Early Help Assessment may be considered to access further support and multi-agency involvement before a further in-house reintegration support plan is implemented. Rewards will be given to students exceeding their individual targets and who make improvements to their attendance.

9.2 Strategies for Amber Groups

This group contains those students who are at risk of becoming a Persistently absent (PA) student.

The aim is prevention, with support the key.

- The Senior Attendance Champion will meet with the Attendance Officer to scrutinise data to assess possible patterns/reasons for absence.
- The Senior Attendance Champion and the Attendance Officer will meet with parents and the student to implement an attendance plan over a two week period.
- We will monitor attendance carefully over the targeted time.
- A first day response phone call in addition to the Synergy/e-mail service as well as relevant calls/communication from the child's Head of House to encourage good attendance.
- Referral to relevant outside agencies or Pastoral staff in school
- Early Help referral offered
- Rewarding and praising students who exceed their targets who improve their attendance.

9.3 Strategies for Green Groups

This group contains students who have been identified by Form Tutors, who would initiate some or all of the following:

- Set individual targets and rewards as necessary.
- Encourage students to exceed their half term targets.
- Give suitable rewards.
- Weekly/Half Term/Term Tutor group rewards for 100% attendance

The aim is for numbers in the Red and Amber groups to decrease. There clearly will be movement between groups as individual attendance deteriorates or improves throughout the academic year.

9.4 Half Term Attendance Rewards

Any student who achieves 100% attendance over a half term period will receive 20 positive points, Reward Assembly awards, reward postcards and chocolate rewards/certificates depending on their attendance record.

9.5 Attendance/Behaviour Reward Trips

Only students whose attendance remains above 95% will be considered for Attendance/Behaviour Reward trip at the end of the Autumn term. Students with unauthorised absences during term time will not be considered. All student absence will be judged on their individual circumstance for the reward visit.

Students in Years 10 and 11 will not attend the Rewards Trip but will be placed into a draw for vouchers to reward their excellent attendance at the end of term.

9.6 Attendance Awards

Students who achieve 100% attendance over each term, the whole of an academic year, or subsequent continuous 100% attendance for 1 or more years will receive a certificate presented at the Termly Rewards Assemblies, Lower School Rewards Afternoon, Year 11 Prize Giving and Year 11 GCSE Awards

Evenings. Any child who achieves 100% attendance for 5 full years at Balshaw's will receive a special certificate at GCSE Awards Evening, a monetary reward as well as an acknowledgment from the Local Authority of their achievement.

10. Monitoring, Analysis, Evaluation and Action Planning

The Deputy Headteacher Pastoral Care, the Attendance Officer and Heads of House are the designated staff with specific responsibility for monitoring the whole school and year group attendance respectively, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's procedures:

- data is collected and disseminated to all relevant staff weekly (each Monday) and published on the staff and student bulletin
- feedback re analysis of attendance data will be provided by the Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Officer. The analysis might identify specific issues for the various audiences:
- patterns of broken weeks by individual Students
- patterns of absence for individual Students
- misuse or inconsistent use of absence codes across the school
- trends in reasons for absence, extended medical leave, granted leave in exceptional circumstances, exclusions, etc
- trends in particular groups (ethnic groups, gender), forms or years

11. Appendices:

Appendix 1- Attendance and absence registration codes

From August 2024, the DfE have introduced new Attendance Codes. These new codes can be found below:

School Attendance Codes September 2024 onwards

Code	Meaning	Type
/ \	Present at school / morning \ afternoon	Present Mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity • Alternative Provision (AP) not arranged through the approved framework	Present Mark
C	Authorised Circumstance	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another school • Attending Alternative Provision at another school site • Hospital education- child is in hospital as an inpatient • Education at a secure / residential site • Off-site direction on a managed move	Present Mark
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision (AP) made	Authorised absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or Term Leave not granted by the school	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised absence

J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for an admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local Authority Home Tutoring, Approved Framework for Alternative Provision Blended Learning,	Present Mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed	Present Mark
M	Attended a medical appointment – medical evidence may be required	Authorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Mark
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Mark
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Present Mark
Q	Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements	Not expected to attend
R	Religious observance	Authorised Mark
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school	Authorised Absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes, and the student has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence
V	Attending an Educational Trip or Visit	Present Mark
W	Attending Work Experience	Present Mark
X	Non-compulsory school age not required to attend school	Present Mark
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown)	Not expected to attend
Z	Prospective or previous student not on admission register	Not expected to attend

School Attendance Codes September 2024 onwards :
Y & C Codes

Code	Meaning	Type
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The Y code : unable to attend school because of unavoidable case, is broken down into the following sub-codes to provide better differentiation of the reason :		
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not available	Not expected to attend
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not expected to attend
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this maybe due to damage or teacher strikes	Not expected to attend
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water or heating	Not expected to attend
Y5	Unable to attend as student is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded in youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.	Not expected to attend
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. Contrary to or prohibited to any guidance relating to the incident or transmission of infection or disease	Not expected to attend
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the student from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the student not just the parent.	Not expected to attend
The C code : Authorised absence is broken down into the following sub codes to provide a better differentiation of the reason :		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a student can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age student subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised Absence

Appendix 2 - Relevant documentation on school attendance
School attendance and the law

There are many pieces of legislation and government regulations and guidance that are relevant to school attendance and to children and their parents and carers. The list below relates to this attendance policy but is not exhaustive. Some elements of government regulations and DfE guidance do not apply to academies and independent schools (but may apply to independent special schools).

Parents and carers

Duty to ensure children receive education

[Section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#) covers the duty of parents to secure the education of children in their care who are of compulsory school age and states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,*
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Offence if a child does not attend regularly

Under [Section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#), if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, their parent is guilty of an offence.

The offence is absolute as the only defences available to the parent are those statutory defences listed within that section of the Act, ie:

- the child was absent with leave granted by the school;
- the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause;
- absence was on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which their parent belongs;
- that the school is not within statutory walking distance and that the local education authority has made no suitable transport arrangements or enabled the pupil to become registered at an alternative nearer school.

Compulsory school age

[Section 8 of the Education Act 1996](#) establishes that a child becomes of compulsory school age on the start date of the term following her/his fifth birthday, or that day if her/his fifth birthday falls on the day term starts.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which he/she reaches the age of 16 or if he/she reaches 16 after the last Friday in June but before the start of the new school year.

Legal definition of "parent" in relation to attendance

The law requires that all "parents" are held responsible for their child's attendance. This definition can include any person who has care of the child. [Section 576 of the Education Act 1996](#) states:

Meaning of "parent".

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or*
- (b) who has care of him.*

Thus, the definition of “parent” means all natural parents, whether they are married or not, and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/or care for a child or young person.

Schools

Attendance and absence registration codes

[Working together to improve school attendance](#), DfE statutory guidance 2024, explains which codes schools should use to record attendance and absence in their registers, and specifies the DfE's expectations of schools and local authorities with respect to school attendance.

Data protection

Schools must ensure that personal data is handled in accordance with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#). See [Balshaw’s Church of England High School]’s Privacy Notice for information about how personal data will be used.

Duty for schools to include attendance information in reports for parents

[The Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005](#)

Duty for schools to notify the local authority when pupils join or leave school

[Regulation 13 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Duty for schools to report attendance concerns about individual pupils to the local authority

[Regulation 13 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Duty for schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

[Keeping children safe in education](#), DfE statutory guidance, regularly updated

Duty for schools to share attendance data with the Government

[Section 537A of the Education Act 1996](#) and

[Share your daily school attendance](#), DfE guidance 2024

Leave of absence

[Regulation 11 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Legal interventions

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child who is on a school roll fails to attend regularly and those absences are recorded by the school as unauthorised.

Legal interventions are available under the following acts, guidance and regulations:

- [Section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- [Section 36 of the Children Act 1989](#)
- [Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#), DfE guidance 2015

Pupils experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#), DfE 2023

[Mental health and behaviour in schools](#), DfE 2018

Pupils with health needs who cannot attend school

[Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs](#), DfE statutory guidance 2023

[Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#), DfE statutory guidance 2015

Pupils with individual needs and specific barriers to attendance

When considering the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance, schools should be mindful of their obligations under the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#). The [Technical Guidance for Schools in England](#), published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, outlines the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for schools.

Regulations regarding participation in performances

[The Children \(Performances and Activities\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#)

Regulations regarding removal from roll

[Regulation 9 of The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

Regulations regarding the school day and number of sessions

[The Education \(School Day and School Year\) \(England\) Regulations 1999](#)

[Requirement for mainstream, state-funded schools to deliver a school week of at least 32.5 hours](#)

[Length of the school week](#), DfE guidance 2023

[Specialist and alternative provision settings are also encouraged to consider extending their core week where appropriate.](#)

Policy Amendments

Updated July 2024
Updated July 2025
Updated September 2026

Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024
Annual Update as per policy
Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026