



Forwards Centre

Part of Bolton Impact Trust

Forwards Centre Attendance Policy

Reviewed By	Damien Mills
Last Reviewed	October 2024
To be reviewed	October 2025

Introduction

It is the aim of the Forwards Centre to support all pupils to have maximum attendance and achieve their true potential. Pupils need to attend the academy regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. The Forwards Centre fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in the academy and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at the Forwards Centre and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils registered at the Forwards Centre and is on our academy website (Bolton Impact Trust).

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Academy Leads and governors at our academy work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from the Forwards Centre frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our academy are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and is seen to be valued by the Forwards Centre .
- Raise awareness with parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Work in partnership with parents and other services (Early Intervention, Health, Transport) so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good academy attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on academy attendance matters.

- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at the academy which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at our academy.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from academy for a legitimate reason and the academy has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the academy to explain the absence.
- Only the academy can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from the academy without the permission of the academy.

Procedures

Our academy will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the academy.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality through Attendance meetings and Early Help reviews.
- To refer to the Early Intervention Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to academy initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Bolton LA and the DfE where requested.

Responsibilities

All members of the academy staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the types of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Nominated attendance mentor

Responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Informing the Academy Lead where there are concerns
- Providing background information to support referrals

- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with pupils the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the EIT Service
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Discussing attendance issues at staff briefings where necessary

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends the academy regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the academy office on the first morning of absence and every subsequent morning when the child is absent.
- Informing the academy in advance of any medical appointments in academy time
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised
- Talking to the academy as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to academy so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Lateness

Once the registration period has closed in the morning (9:30 am) any pupil who comes into academy will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code U). Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to academy later than 9.30 am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve in the day

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the academy will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the academy on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Academy Leads have the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then the child's keyworker or the nominated attendance mentor will contact home requesting these details.

Absence Follow Up

Primary

- The nominated attendance mentor checks the attendance of the children at 9.30am.
- Please see appendix 1.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from the academy long term, the academy will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their academic work. If pupils are absent due to a persistent illness or medical condition, parents/carers are expected to have the matter investigated by medical professionals and a suitable treatment fully explored.

Parental Request for Absence from Academy for Holiday

With effect from August 2024, any pupil absence due to a family holiday taken in term time will be recorded as unauthorised. The regulations make it clear that Academy Leads may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. If you feel there are exceptional circumstances why your child needs to be absent from school, you should apply in advance, by writing to the Academy Lead, explaining clearly the dates and reasons you are requesting leave of absence (See appendix 2). It is at the discretion of the Academy Lead whether to authorise the absence. If the school refuses a request for leave of absence and the child is still taken out of school this will be recorded as unauthorised absence

Addressing Attendance Concerns

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits at the Forwards Centre. It is the responsibility of the Academy Leads, keyworkers, the nominated attendance mentor and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. The nominated attendance mentor and the Academy Lead have the responsibility for ensuring that all the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular Pastoral meetings are held to share any concerns and to discuss necessary actions and support. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually and therefore parents are always informed if we have concerns.

An Attendance Overview Letter (See appendix 3) will be issued to parents/carers when a pupil has had four unauthorised absences (equivalent of two days) recorded over a 10-week rolling period. After six unauthorised absences (equivalent of three days) have been recorded over a 10-week rolling period, the Attendance Officer will conduct an Attendance Support Meeting with parents/carers to discuss what further support is needed to help the pupil's attendance improve. If there is still no improvement in the pupil's attendance and the pupil has ten unauthorised sessions (equivalent of five days) recorded over a 10-week rolling period, a Notice to Improve

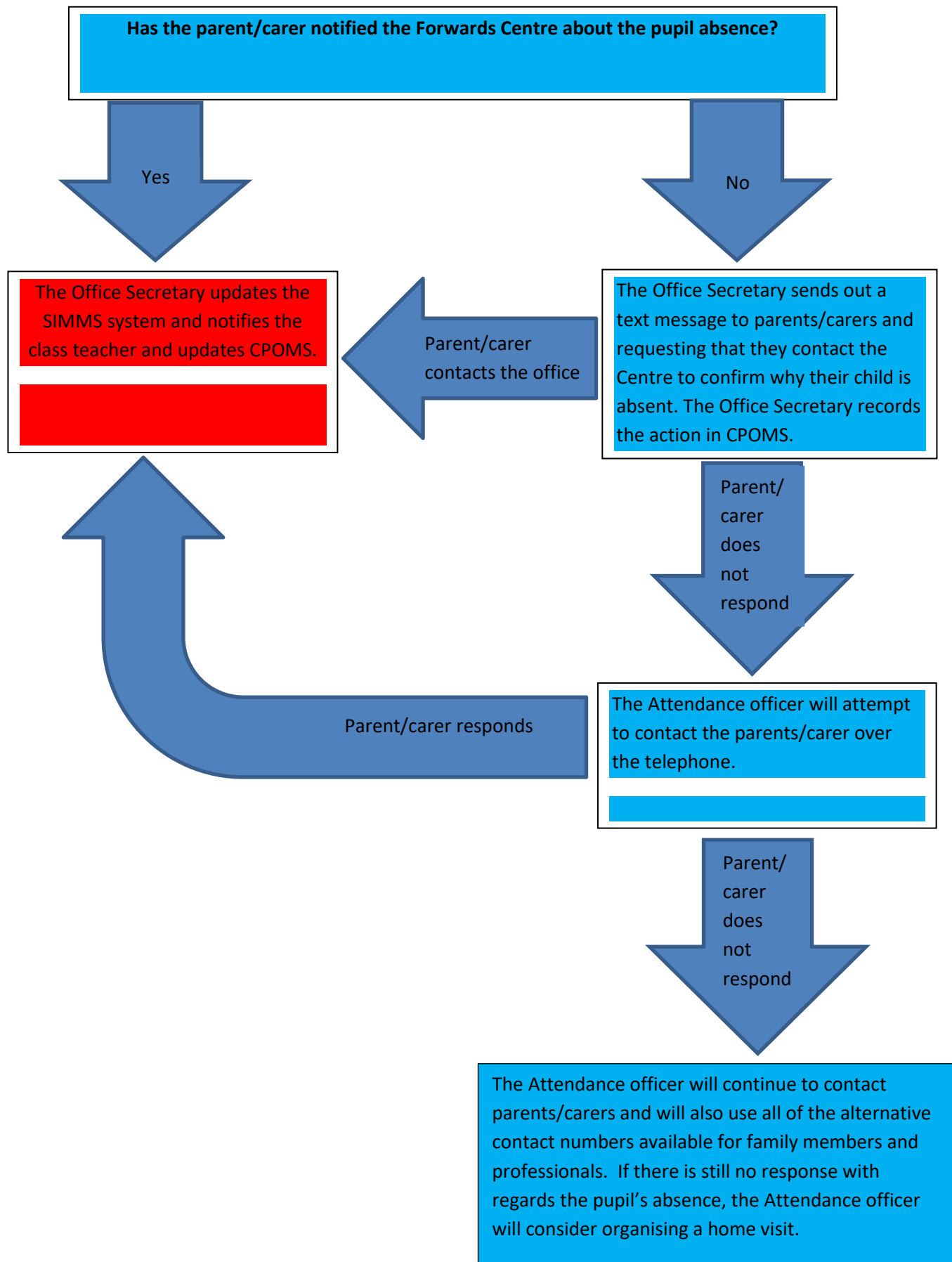
Letter (See appendix 4) will be issued to parents/carers. The Notice to Improve letter clearly outlines the steps that school have already taken to support and address attendance issues and highlights the possibility of a fixed penalty notices being issued if there is not sufficient improvement.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and can be issued when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent of 5 days consecutive or otherwise) over a 10-week rolling school period. A separate Penalty Notice can be issued for each parent per child.

The Attendance mentor will consider making a referral to the Early Intervention Service at this stage as part of an effective response to supporting families whose children have attendance issues which could provide further recommendations and guidance on how to achieve the best outcomes moving forwards.

Appendix 1

FORWARDS CENTRE ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE



Appendix 2



Parents Section

Child's name	
Academy	
Parent name	
Address	
Telephone	
Details of request	
Length of absence (no of school days)	
Last day in School	
Date due back in school	
Parent signature	
Date	

Appendix 3

Date

Address

Dear «Parental_Salutation»

RE: Attendance Overview

We are writing regarding «Forename»'s attendance. «Forename»'s attendance is currently «**M__Present**»%. Regular attendance is extremely important and can have an impact on «Forename»'s learning.

Research shows that:

- Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in primary and secondary school.
- Missing school has a huge impact on how well a pupil gets on at school.
- The more school a child misses, the harder it is for them to get into a routine of attending regularly and catch up on the work they have missed.

As parents/carers you can best support your child to secure regular attendance and punctuality by:

- Ensuring a good bedtime routine to enable your child to get enough sleep.
- Establishing a good routine each evening and each morning so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Making sure your child attends school every day it is open, unless there is an exceptional reason preventing this.
- Praising and rewarding your child's efforts and achievements at school.
- Supporting school staff by working in partnership to best manage and support your child with any difficult or challenging behaviour or circumstances.
- Discussing any problems or difficulties with the school as soon as they arise – staff are here to help.

We would like to support you in helping to improving «Forename»'s attendance, if you would like to discuss further, please contact Mr Damien Mills (Senior Lead Learning Mentor) or Mr Qasid Iqbal (Lead Learning Mentor)

Yours sincerely

C Fielding

Mr C Fielding

Academy Lead

Appendix 4

School Attendance Notice to Improve

Date:

(Please read this letter carefully)

Address

RE: Notice to Improve

School attendance is hugely important. For your child to gain the full benefit from their education, for their learning, wellbeing, and wider development, they need to attend on time, every day possible.

«FORENAME» «SURNAME» as the parent/carer of «Students_Name», (who is a registered pupil at **The Forwards Centre**.

School have offered support to you and your family to try and help improve «Students_Name»'s attendance, including:

1. **Telephone calls.** The school contacted you on «dates», when your child was absent to understand why your child was absent and to offer their support with any issues your child may be having.
2. **An Attendance Overview Letter.** The school wrote to you, letting you know about «Students_Name»'s attendance, the impact of their continued absence, and inviting you to contact the school to discuss the situation further.
3. **An Attendance Support Meeting Invite.** The school invited you to a meeting to discuss your child's unauthorised absences and to offer support to ensure that their attendance improved. You were notified of the consequences should your child continue to have unauthorised absence and you did not effectively engage with the support offered.

Unfortunately, despite the support that was offered, attendance remains a cause for concern. Between «WARNING_START_DATE» and «WARNING_END_DATE» the pupil failed to attend regularly at «School_Name», which resulted in 10 sessions (half days) or more of unauthorised absences being recorded. Please see the attached registration certificate for details.

You now have 15 school days (3 weeks) in which to improve your child's attendance. During this time your child must show significant improvements in attendance and avoid having any unauthorised absences from school during this period. Should we not see sufficient improvement and further unauthorised absences take place during this period, a Penalty Notice may be requested. A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days, with the opportunity to pay

a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days. (this will change to omit the opportunity to pay the reduced amount if this relates to a second PN within a 3 year rolling period.)

NB – A Penalty Notice may be issued as soon as an unauthorised absence is recorded.

If you wish to discuss this notice, or discuss what further support is available, please contact us as soon as possible:

Contact Name

School

Address

Telephone:

Yours sincerely

(Name)

(Job Title)

(School Name)