Attendance Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction

It is the aim of Park School 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. Park School 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.

This attendance policy is written in the context of pupils having complex medical needs (e.g. oncology, transplant, kidney failure) and/or significant mental health difficulties which inevitably impact on attendance.

Furthermore, difficulties are frequently chronic, entrenched and longstanding. Pupils may well have had months or years of 'poor' or 'non-school' attendance before our service becomes involved. As a result, the education offer is personalised to individual pupils based on advice from health and other professionals and is reviewed on a half termly basis.

The management of attendance procedures provides guidance but should be used sensitively, in light of the current medical/mental health need status of the child. We endeavour to work closely with families and other agencies to support and promote improvements in attendance.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this academy and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our academy on our academy website.

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.

Some pupils at Park School are on dual roll with a mainstream school. We ensure we maintain strong communication with the home school as responsibilities for education provision, outcomes, attendance and safeguarding remains firmly with them.

2. 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 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.

3. Legislation 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](#)

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The local governing body

The local governing body is responsible for:

> Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
>> o Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
>> o 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:

  o The importance of good attendance

  o That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues

  o The school's legal requirements for keeping registers

  o 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

  > Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools]

  > Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The headteacher (Academy Lead)

The headteacher (Academy Lead) 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 the attendance officer to be able to do so

> Working with the parents 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 through all available channels

4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') 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 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Rachel Beattie and can be contacted via beattier@boltonimpacttrust.org.uk

4.4 Class teacher/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office at the end of the morning and afternoon form periods.

4.5 School administrator

The school administrator will:

Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on CPOMS. The DSL/deputy DSL is also alerted to any absence.

Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Deputy Academy Lead / Academy Lead, where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

Follow up any unauthorised absence.

4.6 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 timetable session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.30am 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
- Talk 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.

> Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Rachel Beattie Deputy Academy Lead, who can be contacted via Phone: 01204 937115 E mail: beattier@boltonimpacttrust.org.uk

4.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school everyday

> Attend every timetabled session, on time

> Attend school on time

5. Recording attendance

5.1 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 9am and ends at 2.45pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9.30am.The register for the second session will be taken at 12.45pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

5.2 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 practically possible, by calling the school office on 01204 937115 staff.

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.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence school will contact home to find out the details of the absence.

5.3 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 school by ringing the school office with as much advance notice as possible.

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 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 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

> Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to academy later than 10.10am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

> We will monitor lateness closely and will work with families to support and address issues with lateness, however lateness can be used as evidence in the fixed penalty notice procedure.

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

> Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If we cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts we may conduct a home visit, contact other professional working with the family or contact the police.

> In the case of children on a safeguarding plan we will inform the social worker on each day of absence.

> If a child is absent for 4 consecutive days without contact from a parent/carer a member of staff will visit the home.

> Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to relevant external agencies e.g. social care etc

> If we are unable to locate a student we will refer through to Bolton's Missing in Education team **(See Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.)**

> If we have any safeguarding concerns due to a child attendance we will refer to the designated safeguarding officer who will take the appropriate action **(see Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.)**

> 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: We will consider issuing a notice to improve, penalty notice or seek other legal intervention (see section 6.4 below), as appropriate

> 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

> Call 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 the early intervention team

5.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 4.6 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

The Academy Lead 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 Academy Leads discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances' as circumstances which are unexpected, unavoidable, and outside of your control.

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, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, by sending a letter detailing the reasons for requested absence to the Academy Lead. The Academy Lead 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 5.2 and 5.3 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

6.2 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 Academy lead (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

7. Absconding from school

7.1 Definitions

It is important for Park School as a school to maintain a caring, welcoming ethos which establishes a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn.

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, schools and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their pupils. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities.

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school. Staff are reminded to read the following school policies and practice guidelines in conjunction with this policy –

Safeguarding Policy
Behaviour Policy
Enhanced Risk Assessments (if applicable)

It is important for Park School as a school to maintain a caring, welcoming ethos which establishes a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn.

PROCEDURES

Where a pupil marked present, is found to be absent from school without authorisation the following safeguarding procedures must be followed:

1. Member of staff to inform Academy Lead or member of SLT and the office administrator.
2. Academy Lead or member of SLT organises search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
3. If the pupil is not found then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
4. School office must phone the police when area has been fully checked if the child is not found.
5. School office to immediately contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation when the Police have been informed. Always keep parents updated.
6. Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, any active risk assessment and on what action is in the child's best interests. Liaise with the police at all times.
7. Any staff who leave school grounds must take a mobile phone to contact school. Staff should where possible leave the site accompanied by another member of staff.
8. Once a pupil has been found then the lead SLT member will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
9. A report on CPOMS must be filed on the incident.

10. Member of SLT must brief police and parents.

Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation the following procedures must be followed:

1. Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school.
2. De-escalation techniques must be attempted. In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm as possible and follow procedures. (See Appendix 1)
3. If a student is deemed to be a high risk to themselves or other people then staff should adhere to the Positive Handling Strategies as per MAPA training.
4. At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting them at risk by running onto a busy road, for example.
5. If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school the Academy lead or SLT members must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.
6. Staff will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student at a safe distance if in view.
7. The SLT lead may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact school.
8. If the searching staff lose sight of, or are concerned for the safety of the student or themselves, they must contact the school office giving current details of their location and the clothes which the student is wearing.
9. The SLT or designated staff must contact the Police and student's parents/carers immediately. These phone calls must be made concurrently.
10. If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and are no longer visible then the SLT will make a decision as to how to take matters further which will take into account the age of the student, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.

11. If the student returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
12. Upon his or her return to school, and when the student is calm, the student should be seen by the SLT so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail if this is appropriate. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions.
13. A report on CPOMS must be filed on the incident.
14. It is important that following an incident the issues that arise are addressed and staff must:
- Consider an individual risk assessment for the student involved. If there is a second incident within an academic year then a risk assessment must be completed.
- Where appropriate, talk through the incident with the student and parents involved. Ensure that a record is kept of the discussion held with the student and parents.
- Complete an incident on CPOMS which can be actioned by the staff member completing the follow up meeting.
- Keep all colleagues informed and discuss the incident in staff meetings.

- Review procedures for the individual every half term to ensure appropriate control measures are in place and that all staff are fully informed.

Pupils who return to school after absconding

Most pupils who abscond will do so as a result of a specific incident which may have taken place either at school, at home or on the way to school.

For those pupils who return to school either by their own choice, with parental support or following intervention by a member of staff, thought should be given to their welfare. They are likely to be in need of support, understanding and perhaps some time apart from their peers. In some cases it may be deemed that it is not safe for pupils to return to school after absconding. This decision will be made by a member of the senior management team and reasons will be clearly shared with parents/carers.

7.2 Risk assessments

All children attending Youth Challenge are risk assessed and if they have a history of running off, absconding in their mainstream school, they have a personalised Risk Assessment and a Personal Evacuation and Exit Plan. These will cover potential risks during evacuations, transport to and from the site, academy reward trips off site enrichment activities and at the start and the end of the school day as they are entering and leaving the premises. If a child does abscond during these times staff follow the same procedures outlined in this policy.

7.3 Parent & Carers

Parents / carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the school.
They are responsible for encouraging their children to keep to all school procedures and policies. Once school has informed the parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with the subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming to school to help secure the safety of the child after he / she has absconded as well as meeting with the Academy Leads or another member of the senior leadership team in order to agree subsequent actions.

7.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Each incident will be recorded monitored and evaluated. Individual Risk Assessment for the pupil will be amended if needed.

7.5 Procedures

Where a pupil marked present, is found to be absent from school without authorisation the following safeguarding procedures must be followed:

1. Member of staff to inform Academy lead , member of SLT, designated staff and main office.

2. Academy lead or member of SLT organises search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.

3. If the pupil is not found then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.

4. School office must phone the police when area has been fully checked if the child is not found.

5. School office to immediately contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation when the Police have been informed. Always keep parents updated.

6. Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, any active risk assessment and on what action is in the child's best interests. Liaise with the police at all times.

7. Any staff who leave school grounds must take a mobile phone to contact school. Staff should where possible leave the site accompanied by another member of staff.

8. Once a pupil has been found then the lead SLT member will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.

9. A report on CPOMS must be filed on the incident.

10. Member of SLT must brief police and parents.

Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation the following procedures must be followed:

1. Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school.

2. De-escalation techniques must be attempted. In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm as possible and follow procedures. (Appendix 2)

3. If a student is deemed to be a high risk to themselves or other people then staff should adhere to the Positive Handling Strategies as per CPI training.

4. At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting them at risk by running onto a busy road, for example.

5. If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school the Academy Lead or SLT members must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.

6. Staff will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student at a safe distance if in view.

7. The Academy lead or SLT member may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact school.

8. If the searching staff lose sight of, or are concerned for the safety of the student or themselves, they must contact the school office giving current details of their location and the clothes which the student is wearing.

9. The office administrator must contact the Police and student's parents/carers immediately. These phone calls must be made concurrently.

10. If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and are no longer visible then the Academy Lead or SLT member will make a decision as to how to take matters further which will take into account the age of the student, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident

which led to the pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.

11. If the student returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.

12. Upon his or her return to school, and when the student is calm, the student should be seen by the Academy Lead or SLT member so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail if this is appropriate. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions.

13. A report on CPOMS must be filed on the incident.

14. It is important that following an incident the issues that arise are addressed and staff must:

- Consider an individual risk assessment for the student involved. If there is a second incident within an academic year then a risk assessment must be completed.

- Where appropriate, talk through the incident with the student and parents involved. Ensure that a record is kept of the discussion held with the student and parents.

- Complete an incident on CPOMS which can be actioned by the staff member completing the follow up meeting.

- Keep all colleagues informed and discuss the incident in staff meetings.

- Review procedures for the individual every half term to ensure appropriate control measures are in place and that all staff are fully informed.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

We strive to encourage excellent attendance through positive feedback and comments. Phone calls or text messages home are a great way in which we communicate excellent attendance. We do not have a specific reward scheme for 100% attendance, or high attendance, because all of our students attend Park school due to medical reasons and therefore this may have an effect on their attendance, any absence is usually out of their control. We do have a separate reward scheme and we incorporate any good attendance into this.

Our academy will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:
- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- Have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the academy.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- Work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Work with our mainstream schools to monitor the attendance of pupils who are dual registered.
- Refer to the Early Intervention Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to academy initiatives to improve.

- Report attendance statistics to Bolton LA and the DfE where requested.
- Adopt the Early Help process for pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.

9. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

9.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Attendance has been a barrier for many pupils attending Park School. We appreciate that reasons for pupils not attending school can be complex and we address these in a sensitive and supportive manner. We are incredibly flexible and creative in our approach to both attendance and curriculum and work closely with families to create a plan that maximises the potential for pupils to attend school. This may mean supporting parents with transport arrangements, exploring bespoke timetable options, working closely with other agencies, utilising the expertise or premises of other parts of our trust, or educating pupils in their home. The eventual aim with any such plan is to work toward full time on-site attendance when appropriate.

9.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

In situations where pupils are unable to attend school due to mental or physical ill health, we endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments possible to support them in attending. This may mean devising a bespoke timetable, utilizing the expertise or premises of other parts of our trust, or educating pupils in their home. Alongside our academic provision, we are able to offer mentoring and counselling, in addition to signposting pupils to external agencies and resources that they can access for support.

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.

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

Returning to schools following a prolonged period of absence can be a daunting prospect and so we endeavour to alleviate as much anxiety as possible by working with pupils to offer a graduated transition back to school, where appropriate and identifying a key adult in school for pupils to check in with. Wherever possible, and where appropriate, we will endeavour to maintain contact with pupils and their families during any lengthy or unavoidable absences.

10. Attendance monitoring

The office supervisor has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Academy Lead and Deputy Academy Lead to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents

10.1 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.

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 against similar provisions, locally, regionally and nationally where it is available.

10.2 Analysing attendance

We will:

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

> 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

10.3 Using data to improve attendance

We 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 severed absence, and their families (see section 10.4 below)

> Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the local governing body and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator and the designated safeguarding 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

10.4 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:

- o Discuss attendance and engagement at school

- o Listen, and understand barriers to attendance

- o Explain the help that is available

- o Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence

- o 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

11. Monitoring arrangements

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

12. 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
Attending a place other than the school		
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
Absent – leave of absence		
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
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	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
Y1	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
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	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

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	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
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: De-escalation and Positive Handling

We aim to create safe and secure school environments where violence, threatening behaviour or abuse to any member of the community is able to be managed in a therapeutic way to maintain the child's dignity whilst keeping staff and other pupils safe.

We take seriously all acts of violence and aggression against anyone and we will do everything reasonably practicable to reduce risk.

We expect all parents/carers and other visitors to be behave in a reasonable and acceptable manner towards all staff.

We expect all staff to behave professionally at all times and when confronted with difficult situations to attempt to defuse them.

At all times our collective aim should be to seek to reduce the necessity for physical intervention as, depending on the type of restrictive practice used, serious physical injury and psychological harm can occur. Psychological harm may include trauma, fear, shame, anxiety, depression and loss of dignity.

As a result, physical intervention at Park School is avoided unless completely necessary.

<u>**De-escalation strategies**</u>

Below are a range of strategies that could be employed, if the situation allows it, in order to prevent the situation from escalating:

- Don't try to reason
- Do not pursue
- Offer a safe space
- Wait
- Use silence and allow the child to regulate
- Avoid making demands
- Don't yell over a screaming child
- Validate their feelings, not their actions
- Respect personal space
- Give time for reflection
- Be aware of your body language
- Be non-judgemental
- Use a distraction
- Decrease stimulation
- Use a calming tone
- Breathing exercises

<u>**What 4 things should you consider before using a physical intervention?**</u>

For the intervention to be justified there must be a belief that Injury or Damage is likely in the Predictable Future; The intervention must be Immediately Necessary; The actions or interventions taken must be a Last Resort; Any force or intervention used must be the Minimum Necessary to achieve the objective.

Emergency Seclusion

Emergency seclusion is the supervised containment of a person in a room, which may be locked, or equipment is used to prevent it being opened, to protect others from significant harm. This would include staff or a person blocking the exit with their body or ANY item

This is an extreme form of restraint. Staff are NOT permitted to use seclusion because the child/young person becomes aggressive, for not complying with rules, as a punishment or any other reason.

MAPA Decision – Making Matrix

Staff are trained to undertake a risk assessment regarding physical risk behaviour in order to support their critical decision making during a crisis event.

Developing critical decision making enables staff to remain in control of their own emotions and behaviour in order to make appropriate judgements about the necessary action required.

Staff are trained to determine the necessary physical interventions and the level of restriction that may be appropriate to keep people safe making decisions objectively rather than subjectively.

The MAPA Decision Making Matrix is a tool which staff use to reach objective critical decisions about risk.

Risk: The chance that an event or behaviour may occur Everyday life involves some degree of risk which can be viewed along a continuum from lower risk to higher risk.

When reaching a decision about risk, it is important that we objectively consider two key variables;

Likelihood: The chance an event or behaviour may occur. This is viewed along a continuum from unlikely to likely.

Outcome: The severity of harm if the event or behaviour does occur. Outcome can be viewed along a continuum from low-severity to high severity.

When can reasonable force be used?

▪ Reasonable force can be used to prevent children from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.

▪ In the school, force can be used for two main purposes – to control children or to restrain them.

▪ The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgment of the staff member concerned and should always depend on individual circumstances.

Appendix 3 Absconding information for Parents

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

What happens if you / your child / goes missing?

What is meant by "missing"? You will be considered missing if members of staff do not know where you are.

What is meant by "absconding"? You have absconded if you deliberately go off site or from where you should be without telling a member of staff or without a member of staff giving you permission.

What will happen if you go missing? The people looking after you have a responsibility to know where you are and to make sure you are safe. If you are 'missing' they will speak to your friends, teachers and family to see if they can help. If there is concern for your safety then staff will need to search for clues as to where you are. The Police may be informed that you are missing and they and the school staff will look for you.

What happens if you can't be found? A meeting will be held between the school and the Police to plan how to search for you. Your name, description and a photograph will be given to the Police in order to help them with their search.

What happens when you are found? You will be returned to a safe place and will be asked about the reasons for you going missing. This is to try and find out if anything is troubling you and to see if anyone can help. You do not have to run away to talk to someone. If you want to talk to someone outside of school, this can be arranged. You may also be visited by a Police Officer who will check that you are back. This is called a "Safe and Well Check". You will be able to speak to the Police Officer without any member of staff present if you wish to do so.

Will anything else happen? If you are injured or unwell then you will be checked by a Doctor or Nurse. Your teacher or mentor will want to talk to you about going missing. If you have deliberately run away (absconded) then the people responsible for your safety will meet to discuss ways in which such incidents can be prevented by looking at the reasons for your actions.

Remember - You have the right to use a telephone to talk to someone. If you are worried about something or just want to talk, the school counsellor or nurse may be available.

The national ChildLine number is 0800 1111.